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CHILDREN'S TREASURY
OF
BIBLE STORIES

PART III

THREE APOSTLES

MRS. HERMAN GASKOIN





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CHILDREN'S TREASURY

OF

BIBLE STORIES.

PART III.

THE APOSTLES { ST. JAMES THE GREAT,
ST. PAUL,
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

BY

MRS. HERMAN GASKOIN.

EDITED

BY THE REV. G. F. MACLEAR, D.D.

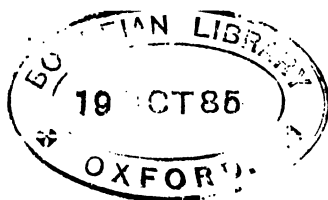
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Children's Treasury of Bible Stories

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

ST. JAMES THE GREAT.

WHEN I was drawing near the end of my "New Testament Stories," and saw that I should have scarcely any room left to speak of St. Paul, I said—you may remember—that, possibly, I might some day write a little book entirely about him. And I told you why I thought this might well be done.

Yet, now that the time has come to prepare another little book, I am placing two other names, with his, on the title-page. This Third Part of the "Bible Stories," however, will be very nearly, though not quite, all about St. Paul. And I hope that the few chapters which do not actually treat of him will nevertheless help to throw light on many parts of his history. They will be written, at all events, with that object in view.

I will place St. Paul's Story neither at the beginning, nor at the end, of the book, but in the middle. His name shall stand between the other two names of which I have spoken. And in the last chapter of all I will tell you why.

St. James the Great (so called to distinguish him from the other Apostle of the same name) and St. John the Divine were brothers, and the sons, as you know, of Zebedee, a fisherman at Capernaum. What little is known of Zebedee is soon told. Although

he was but a fisherman, he cannot have been a poor man, for we read that he employed "servants," or hired boatmen, and also that he was in partnership with Simon and Andrew, the sons of Jona. So we must conclude that his trade was larger and more prosperous than most of its kind.

The two sons of Zebedee are first mentioned together in the Bible, in the story of that morning—long to be remembered on the shore of Gennesaret—when the Lord JESUS came to Capernaum, after His first Rejection at Nazareth. He had been despised, abused, and ill-treated, *at home*, where uncomforted pain is always stronger and sharper than anywhere else. And, having met with scorn where before He had only known love, He had turned away from the familiar faces, the well-known houses, the old roads and the old fields, and had set out on His Lonely Life, seeking new friends henceforth, as it were, among strangers. And now He entered the beautiful town by the lake-side, passed through the busy streets, and came down to the beach. There, drawn up out of the water, lay two boats, and near them, in the morning sunshine, sat four fishermen, of whom three at least were not "strangers." These three, you know, were Andrew and Simon, the partners of Zebedee, and John, Zebedee's younger son. The fourth was he whose name stands at the head of this chapter, James, the elder brother of John.

Night, when all is shadowy and still, was the favourite time for fishing at Capernaum, but the night just over had been a very disappointing one to the four friends. For although they had spent it all in their boats, gliding hither and thither in the silent star-light, and sinking their nets now here, and now there, and waiting patiently and long, it had all been quite in vain. They had caught nothing. And now they were sitting on the beach, cleansing and mending *their empty nets*, when, suddenly, the Lord came

walking across the sparkling sand, followed by a gazing, curious crowd. The thronging people knew, as I told you in the other little book, that This was the Healer, at Whose simple Word—spoken too at a distance—the burning fever had instantly fled away from the nobleman's sick son, here, in this very town.

What followed you all know,—how, that He might the more easily speak to the pressing people, the Blessed Saviour borrowed Simon's boat, and—having withdrawn a little from the shore—"taught" them from it, as it lay gently rocking on the shallow wavelets. And how, when that was over, He told Simon to row out into deeper water, and to drop his net there once more. And how Simon, having obeyed, albeit little accustomed to fish in broad daylight, suddenly found his net so full that his brother and he could not drag it up between them, and so were obliged to make signs to the two sons of their partner to come and help them. And how the other boat put off accordingly, and James and John lent their strength too, so that at last the heavy net was lifted, and the boats presently touched land again, both of them filled to overflowing with fish. All this, I say, you know, but I have reminded you of it because these were the events which immediately preceded the Call of James, the son of Zebedee, to be a follower of the Lord. He may indeed have seen and known the Blessed One before, and we certainly must suppose that he had at least heard of Him from his brother John, who, you know, is believed to have been one of His very first disciples. But we are not actually told of any previous acquaintance with the Holy One, while we *are* told that as soon as he landed on the beach, after beholding the great miracle just described, he was distinctly called by the Lord to follow Him, and that, "*without delay,*" he obeyed that Call. He and his brother *forsook all*, St. Luke tells us, *and followed Him.* James had never seen the Blessed Saviour be-

this immediate, unhesitating decision was, of course, the more remarkable, but it was quite in keeping, as we shall by and by see, with his whole character.

I have said that we know very little about Zebedee, but some light is thrown upon him here. He must have been willing, at least, that his sons should follow the Master. Their readiness to go was indeed their own, but their power to go they must surely have owed to their father; and Zebedee lost his partners too, we must remember, as well as his sons, so that he was left, quite suddenly, with only his hired helpers; and this must have been both a great change and a great loss to him. Yet, it would seem, he made no objection, but allowed his sons to leave him, and all that interested him, and was content to be deserted.

Why this was so I cannot tell you, for I do not know. It may have been that Zebedee was himself conscious of the mighty spell cast upon his sons by the Presence and the Power of the Redeemer. But we are not told; we hear no more about him; he appears for a moment, merely as the father of two noble sons, and disappears.

Of his wife, however, whose influence could hardly fail to affect him, we know more. Not a very great deal, it is true, but enough to interest us deeply. Before, then, we follow James himself any further, let us turn our attention to his mother, for I think we shall find not a little in her character to account for the most marked points in his.

The very name *Mother* must surely be dear to every child, for it seems to express in one word all that is tender, and devoted, and protecting, and unchanging. So I think it will interest you to hear what kind of a person the mother of St. James and St. John was, and then afterwards you can observe their likeness to her, which in truth is plainly to be seen. Salome—for that was her name—is very seldom mentioned, *to be sure, in the Memoirs of the Blessed Saviour;*

but the few words that are written about her are most expressive, that is to say, they mean a great deal. Of that other, and widely different, Salome, the vain and heartless daughter of Herodias, we do but know what happened on one particular day ; yet in her case, too, the little that is said presents us with the key to her general character.

We do not hear anything of the mother of St. James and St. John for some little time after her sons "forsook all" to become disciples of the Lord. I have no doubt that she felt her place to be with her husband as long as he lived. But after a while she was to be found among the actual followers of the Holy One from place to place. So it is supposed that Zebedee had in the meantime died, leaving his widow, no longer tied to home by her duty to him, free to satisfy her heart's longings, and to cast in her lot with Him Who had not where to lay His Head. She was not a woman who was likely to be content with half-measures where she loved. She was zealous, generous, courageous, and *thorough*, as well as warm-hearted and affectionate. She was one of the holy women who, St. Mark tells us, when the Lord "was in Galilee," *followed Him, and ministered unto Him*. And she "followed" Him to the last. She stood among the few mourners who wept at the foot of the Cross—she helped with loving hands to prepare the Blessed Body for Its Burial,—she was one of the faithful women who hastened, at the first Easter Daybreak, to the Grave. Fear had no power over her ; her perfect love cast out all fear. She gave "of her substance," and poured out all her heart's love besides, and "ministered," and sympathized, and watched, to the very End. How her motherly heart must have thrilled when she heard her Divine Master, with His Dying Breath, consign to the kind keeping of one of her beloved sons His own sorely distressed mother. Some think that Salome and the Virgin were clo

connected, or even related, and it may have been so. If there was such a natural tie, the Blessed Redeemer's last charge to St. John could not but greatly strengthen it, and if otherwise, we may still be sure that these two holy women clung to one another as long as they both lived.

Hitherto I have been telling you how Salome loved her Lord. Now let me show you how she loved her ~~son~~. One little picture of this love appears in the Gospel Narrative, and I will place it before you just as it stands there, for the words in which St. Matthew has painted it are a great deal better than any that I know how to use. But recollect, before you read what he says, that *zeal* was one of Salome's chief characteristics, and then you will see that, this once, her eagerness hurried her into a great mistake, which the Holy One immediately corrected, though with the utmost gentleness. Yet, at the same time, we cannot help noticing that she was over-zealous, not for her own sake, but for the sake of the sons who were so dear to her. And now let us hear St. Matthew. He has just been recording the Blessed Lord's Prediction of His Own Sufferings and Death, which—as you have been told before—was a terrible shock to His disciples, for they had been expecting something very different. *Then*—pursues the Evangelist—*came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him.*

And He said unto her : What wilt thou ?

She saith unto Him : Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy Right Hand, and the other on the Left, in Thy Kingdom !

But JESUS answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask ! Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of ? and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with ?

They say unto Him : We are able !

And He saith unto them : Ye shall drink indeed of My

Cup, and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with. But to sit on My Right Hand, and on My Left, is not Mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But JESUS called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His Life a Ransom for many.

In these beautiful and tender Words the Holy One checked the sons, you observe, rather than their mother, but Salome heard and received the Reproof thus gently conveyed to her, and we may be sure that it sank into her heart, and brought forth due fruit in her life. And now it is time to leave Salome, and to turn to her elder son James.

The Twelve Apostles, you recollect, were for special purposes chosen by the Blessed Lord out of the general body of His disciples. They formed, as it were, an inner circle round the Master. But within this circle there was yet another, a still closer bond of fellowship. Three were drawn from the Twelve, to be the companions of the Lord JESUS when, and where, the rest were not invited to follow. I need scarcely remind you, I think, that of these three, James was one, and that the other two were his brother John, and Simon Peter, who—from his habit of taking the lead—has been called “the captain of the Apostles.” They only accompanied their Master into the solemn room where the little daughter of Jairus lay dead upon her bed. They only climbed the steep slope of Hermon with Him, in the waning light, and then fell asleep wearily, never thinking th

He had brought them there to be comforted and helped! And—waking with a start—beheld Moses and Elias, and an unearthly Glory round about, and the Lord Himself transfigured,—and heard the Voice of the Father from the Cloud of Gold. They only followed the Redeemer into the deeper Shadows of the olive-trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, though but to sleep there as they had slept on the mountain, and to awake, as they had then awoke, with a start. Not this time, however, to be dazzled by a flood of heavenly Radiance, but to behold the Beloved Face of their Master stooping over them, wan and worn with the Great Agony through which they had failed to watch with Him,—and to hear that their opportunity was over and lost, and that His *Hour* was at hand, and to catch the sound of the betrayer's advancing footsteps.

It has already been pointed out to you that the New Testament exhibits to us only One complete Character. The Perfect Beauty and Holiness of *That One* arrest and fix our attention at once. All besides is of comparatively little importance. The other characters that are introduced are sketched merely in broken outlines; we catch a glimpse of a feature here, and a feature there, as the light falls this way and that, but not one stands out as a whole, round and clear,—not one of their stories is completely told. They are brought forward now and again, to play their part, and to serve the great general purpose, and then they fall back, and vanish.

Nevertheless, some of these outlined characters are sharply drawn, and reveal a great deal. A few marks, with a master's pencil, often speak volumes. Let us look a little more closely, then, at these three men, chosen, as they were, by One Who could not err, to be His most trusted companions. Of the Three, *James is the least distinctly outlined*. But yet we can *easily perceive one thing*,—that all the three were what

is called *impetuous*. This word means "going against," or "rushing forward," and it is quite commonly, if not generally, used in a very unfavourable sense. But let us examine it for one moment. "Impetus," which is near of kin of it, means *force*. We speak of the "impetus" of a rapid current, which sweeps hindrances away before it. An "impetuous" torrent is a headlong torrent. Perhaps the word "impetuous" is rightly used only when it is intended to represent a certain amount of strength, as well as haste. If this is so, these Three Apostles may indeed be correctly called impetuous. Peter's strength, it is true, was sometimes overbalanced by his weakness. His natural character was full, if I may so express myself, of ups and downs: he rose high, and he fell low. But the time came when what was uneven in him was smoothed, and he was taught to find true strength and steadfastness in deep humility. I think it was a Look that did this. A Look that sent him, one sad night, sobbing as if his heart would break, out into the deserted streets of Jerusalem—to be alone with the shame that covered him.

James does not seem to have been swayed by changing moods, like Peter. Whenever he appears—and it is not often—he is always the same. But in him too, and in his brother, we see the same impetuosity of character. Only, in them it flowed on steadily, as their mother's did, instead of ebbing as well as flowing, like Peter's.

I may say, with all reverence, that the Blessed Lord Himself pointed out this characteristic in the sons of Salome, for He bestowed upon them both a name which expresses it. *He surnamed them*, says St. Mark, *Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder*. This "surname" speaks for itself. It signifies force, and vehemence, and fiery energy. Now these are not the characteristics which are associated in most minds with what we call "goodness." We are right-
accustomed to consider "the ornament of a

and quiet spirit " of great price. But he who is really meek is powerful, not feeble, for he is the ruler of his own spirit ; and the truest gentleness is the gentleness of strength. Where there is energy, there is something, as it were, to begin upon ; all that is wanted is its direction into a right channel. When governing impulse is changed into impulse governed, it is a grand and beautiful thing to see.

It will be my pleasant task to show you how " the sons of thunder " brought all their vigour, and their zeal, and their impulsiveness, and laid them down—with their lives—at their Master's Feet.

CHAPTER II.

ST. JAMES THE GREAT.

THIS chapter shall open with a passage from St. Luke's Gospel, containing one of those beautiful Parables of the Blessed Lord, which I have elsewhere called " picture-lessons." And when I have written it, I will explain to you why I have made room for it just here.

Behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him—that is, the Lord—saying : Master ! what shall I do to inherit Eternal Life ?

He said unto him : What is written in the Law ? how readest thou ?

And he, answering, said : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And He said unto him : Thou hast answered right ; this do, and thou shalt live.

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto JESUS, And who is my neighbour ?

And JESUS, answering, said : A certain man went

down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and, when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and, when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will re-pay thee.

Which now, of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said: He that shewed mercy on him.

Then said JESUS unto him: Go, and do thou likewise!

Pages might be written about this Parable, for every line is full of teaching, wrapped in beautiful words. But my object just now is only to draw your attention to the circumstance that the third person who passed the wounded man—and the only one who cared about his sufferings and took pains to relieve them—was *a Samaritan*. On this the point of the Story turns. First a priest, and then a Levite, whose very offices alone should have made them ready helpers, had shunned their poor countryman, and had passed on without even a word of sympathy. But the person who did pity him, and, indeed, showered kindnesses upon him, was, not only neither priest nor Levite, not only a mere stranger,—but *a Samaritan*. Now to say this, was the same thing to the “lawyer” who was listening to the Tale, as to say that he was an enemy. The Lord could have chosen no stronger expression; it

using it He spoke quite as plainly as when, once before, His Words had been these: *I say unto you which hear: Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you!* Clearly, then, it is only by understanding how the Jews felt towards the Samaritans, that we can grasp what the Blessed Saviour meant when He said that every disciple of His must love his "neighbour" as himself. And in order to understand this thoroughly, we must turn and look back for a very long way.

I have no doubt you recollect that after the death of Solomon, the kingdom that had been his was divided into two parts, the northern and larger division being known as the kingdom of *Israel*, while the other was called the kingdom of *Judah*. You read in Part I. that there was very little peace or rest in the kingdom of Israel. It was the scene of constant violence and disturbance, and it came to an end in suffering and shame. After the terrible siege of Samaria, its capital town, the country was swept quite bare of its inhabitants, and was left for more than forty years absolutely empty. The ten tribes who had formed this unhappy kingdom were in the meantime scattered far and wide in their banishment, and the place that had known them knew them no more. At last the Assyrian king who was trying to conquer the kingdom of Judah began to think that it was not prudent to leave such a large tract of country quite empty and unprotected, and determined to plant settlements of people here and there, in order to prevent its being seized by any enemy. The Bible tells us that he *brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Avah, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them,*

which slew some of them. When the king of Assyria heard this, he sent one of the captive Israelitish priests back to Samaria, to teach the settlers there how to serve God. But for a long time their religion was of a mixed kind, for they only worshipped the Lord as well as their own false gods, and not instead of them. By degrees, however, these Samaritans, as they were called, gave up most of their corrupt practices, and when the Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the Captivity began to re-build the Temple, they wanted to join in the work. But the Jews would not allow them to have anything to do with it, which made them very angry; and as they might not help, they resolved to hinder the builders. This they did, only too successfully, for some time, and then they built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim; and when that was destroyed, they built another at Shechem. This last place is now known as Nablous, and at this very day there are Samaritans living there. The building of a second Temple was a deadly offence in the eyes of the Jews, and was never forgotten. Hatred of the people who had committed this offence was handed down from father to son, and grew—as all cherished feelings do grow—until it knew no bounds. At last it was really considered a Jewish *duty* to hate the Samaritans, to refuse them all hospitality, and even to avoid passing through their country. (The name “Samaria” had been extended to a large province by the Romans, who divided Palestine afresh, to suit their own convenience.) Nor did the Samaritans feel more charitably towards the Jews. They, on their part, never forgot that they had not been allowed to assist in rebuilding the Temple; and as the contempt with which they were afterwards treated brought all their worst feelings into play, they never lost an opportunity of annoying the Jews, and thus the relations between the two peoples became little better than a continual *exchange of insults*. Once, when the Jews were ver

angry with the Blessed Saviour—so angry that they presently took up stones to cast at Him—they seized on the most scornful name they knew, and applied it to Him. *Say we not well, they cried, that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*

I think it must now be clear to you that the Lord could not possibly have laid more stress on the length and breadth of the New Commandment *to love one another*, than by introducing a *Samaritan* into this Parable, as the one person who had compassion on a suffering stranger because he saw in *every* sufferer his neighbour whom he was to love as himself.

I have written all this about the Samaritans for several reasons, one of which is, that it will explain the following incident in the life of St. James. *It came to pass*, says St. Luke—who is writing of the Blessed Lord—*when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set his Face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His Face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they—the Samaritans—did not receive Him, because His Face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said: Lord! wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said: Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of! For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.* It is true that this is but a very short sketch of a mere passing occurrence, and it may seem to you that I have introduced it by a long and roundabout preface. But, like many another "passing occurrence," it was an important one, and unless you were aware of the violent hostility that existed between the Samaritans and the Jews, I do not see how you could justly judge of the conduct of James and John under the particular circumstances described. Now, however,

it stands before you explained, although, of course, not excused. "Sons of thunder" though they were, nothing short of a very strong national prejudice would have carried these two Apostles away into such an extreme of angry and revengeful feeling.

Their Master, Who by no means avoided Samaria, rebuked them for their uncharitable spirit, though they had been indignant for His sake, and not for their own, just as their mother had been ambitious for their sakes, and not for her own. And He sought admission into some other, probably Samaritan, village. In sending forth His Apostles on their first missionary circuit, He had indeed desired them not to address any except Jews. *Go not, He had said, into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* But this was not from any wish to limit their love and sympathy. It was only because the Gospel was to be preached *to the Jew first*, and afterwards to the Gentile. The Dear Lord's Own Love and Mercy were from the very first unlimited. One of His most beautiful Discourses was delivered to a poor sinful Samaritan woman. And, another time, when He had healed ten lepers, who had prayed to Him for mercy as they passed, one of them—only one—turned back to thank Him. *And he, adds St. Luke, was a Samaritan.* The significance of these few added words will not now be lost upon you. I hope to show you on a future page two other reasons for the pains I have taken to make the position of the Samaritans clear to you. But now I must hasten on, for I have still a few words to say about the prayer of Salome. Her sons certainly shared the feeling which sent it to her lips, and indeed may very probably have suggested its utterance to her, for in St. Mark's account of it her name does not appear at all. And we have seen that the Lord JESUS addressed His Reply to them, and *no to her.* *Are ye able,* He asked, *to drink of the C*

that I shall drink of? and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with? And they answered impetuously, without a shadow of hesitation: *We are able!* Then the Holy One made them a promise: *Ye shall drink indeed of My Cup,* He said, *and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with!* So much of their eager wish was to be granted, though how far they then saw the connection between the Cup and the Baptism of Suffering, and the "Kingdom" of the Lord, we cannot tell. Pre-eminence in suffering might be theirs, then, but none of a less holy kind. The future was, no doubt, very dim to them at that time; they peered into it half wistfully, half curiously, but not at all fearfully. They, with Andrew and his brother, were the anxious inquirers as to the time when all that their Master predicted should come to pass. *Tell us!* they pleaded, *when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign, when all these things shall be fulfilled?*

But the day came when the Cup and the Baptism to which they had pledged themselves no longer loomed vague and far away. Let us pass on.

Forty-four years afterwards, we meet St. James again. We have but a glimpse of him, it is true. It is as if the mist that had hidden him all those years suddenly cleared for one moment, just to show him to us in the very act of drinking that Cup, of receiving that Baptism, for which, so long before, he had—too lightly, perhaps—declared himself ready.

The vassal-king Herod Agrippa I. was now master of all the dominions that had once belonged to his grandfather, Herod the Great. He wished to become a favourite with the Jews, and accordingly tried to please them in every possible way. Some one probably gave him a hint that a blow aimed at the followers of JESUS of Nazareth would be the step of *all others by which he might hope to win popularity*

It was enough. The Apostle James, the son of Salome, was suddenly seized and killed. We are not told why he was chosen to be the first victim, but we may well believe that, his old impetuosity transfigured into quenchless and passionless love for his Ascended Master, he was one of the most zealously active of the Apostolic band. He was not stoned, but beheaded. The Jewish law provided that the teachers of a strange form of worship should be stoned if they were only few in number, but beheaded if they were many. So perhaps Herod Agrippa at first meant to kill many more Christians, besides James, though he may merely have preferred the Roman to the Jewish way of dealing death. We know no particulars of this, the first martyrdom among the Apostles; the Bible merely records the fact, and silence and darkness cover the details. But let me point out to you that, little as is said about it, the death of St. James is the only death, among the Twelve whose number Matthias completed, that is recorded in the Bible at all.

Very shortly after this, St. Paul came to Jerusalem. He stayed only a short time, having come, as you know, for a special purpose, but yet his appearance in the Holy City at all, just then, is well worthy of remark. For it was he who, in a large measure, was to supply the place of the dead Apostle. Thus the short story of St. James is a not unfitting introduction to the long story of St. Paul. There was another person, however, who only stepped into prominence after the martyrdom of St. James, and who also helped to fill the vacancy it had left. This was the other Apostle James, the son of Alphæus, called The Less, to distinguish him from the son of Salome. He is also known as James the Just, but at the time which we are now considering, he had not won this name. It was given to him afterwards, when he was more widely known and respected. You will see after a time ho-

thoroughly he deserved respect. But this is not place to say more about him. It is with St. Paul, other successor of the brave James the Great, that are more immediately concerned.

CHAPTER III.

SAUL OF TARSUS.

THIRTEEN books of the Bible, as you have already heard, consist of letters written by St. Paul. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which was written by St. Luke, refers also to the period of which they treat; and our knowledge of the life of St. Paul is collected from these fourteen books, though not one of them gives us any regular account of it. I have remarked before that even those New Testament characters that are best known to us are only drawn in outline. This outline is more filled in, however, in the case of St. Paul, than in any other. He stands out more distinctly before us than his fellow-Apostles, so that we cannot help feeling that we *know* him better than any of them. Yet this is not because we are acquainted with his history from beginning to end, for it is far otherwise; nor merely because he wrote so much that we can read. The reason, I think, is that what he did write was in the shape of *letters*. For letters, you know, are very like the people who write them. They are the natural outpourings of the heart, and so are sure to be full of what fills the heart. And the heart is the seat of character. Now St. Paul's heart was quite full of love for the Blessed Saviour, and these letters of his, which the Holy Spirit prompted him to write, reflect his character so truly, that even if we had no other means of judging, we should still see clearly what kind of man he was.

There is no doubt at all that he was one of the

very noblest men that ever lived ; his Divine Master was his Model and his Friend, and in His Strength he was strong, so that there is a decided likeness between his life and THE LIFE of lives. A likeness, and yet an unlikeness, which we must always notice if we compare any man, however devout and holy, with THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. I do not mean merely the immeasurable difference between Perfection and imperfection, but a contrast, besides that, which perhaps is due, on man's part, to infirmity rather than to sin. It is the contrast between Repose and effort. It is true that this is only, in other words, the contrast between Divinity and sinful humanity, and that therefore it could not but exist, but it is not on that account less important that we should observe it. Some day, when you are able to do so properly, you will fully perceive my meaning if you compare—by way of a single instance—the Manner of the Blessed Lord, when He exercised His Power over death, with the action of those two great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, when, under similar circumstances, extraordinary power was granted to them. You will find ample details in the Bible of what I can only lightly sketch here. When the only son of the poor widow at Zarephath, and the only son of the rich woman of Shunem were stricken down by the hand of Death, Elijah—in the one case—and Elisha—in the other—prayed fervently that the life which had vanished might re-appear. And when the chilled limbs began to grow warm, and the dead eyelids lifted slowly, it was in answer to those vehement prayers of theirs. The miracles which made the hearts of those two bereaved mothers sing for joy, were God's. But in both cases the prophets seconded their prayers by great efforts ; they exerted themselves mightily to restore animation according to the human methods known to them. Body and spirit were both hard at work, if I may so speak, all the time.

But when the Lord JESUS met the funeral of the other widow's only son, winding slowly down the road from Nain, there was no movement, or effort, outward sign of power,—nothing but a few quiet Words spoken to the dead: "I say unto thee: Arise." And as it was in the midst of the funeral train, so was it by the bedside of another dead "only child; there was nothing more than the gentle Taking by the hand, and the Tender Invitation,—such as the child's mother might have given any morning in waking her from sleep—"Little maiden! Arise!" And so was it before the grave that had been four days closed. The Call was enough: "Lazarus! Come forth!" Words, spoken and unspoken, had indeed been uplifted to the Father before that Call, but they, we are expressly told, were for the sake of those who were looking on. Between JESUS of Nazareth and the greatest of His prophets there stretched all the difference between a Commander and a petitioner. It is good that you should mark the distance that must needs lie between the Majestic Peace of Him Who was One with the Father, and the most heroic struggles of His noblest servants, whether against death—as we have just seen in the cases of Elijah and Elisha—or against sin, of which death is but the wages, as we shall see in the case of St. Paul. "Effort" is too weak a word to express the desperate struggle which filled Paul's mature life. That life was a battle, and the enemy was Sin; and Paul himself was a soldier, who never relaxed his watchfulness, or laid down his arms, or put off his armour, until death brought him rest. *This one thing, he cried, I do! forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in CHRIST JESUS.* The grandness of this life takes possession of our minds as we gaze upon it, yet he who lived it declared himself to be "the chief of sinners," and "less

than the least of all saints," and "not meet to be called an Apostle." *I find a law, he says, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God that I am delivered through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.*

The parents of Paul—or Saul, as we must call him in his youth—lived, at the time of his birth, at Tarsus, the chief town of the Roman province called Cilicia. A glance at the map of ancient Asia Minor will show you that Cilicia lay at the north-east corner of the Mediterranean Sea, and that the great Taurus mountain range ran across it. Here were large forests, and the trees that were cut down in them were used as timber in the sea-ports of the Mediterranean. For this purpose they were conveyed first to Tarsus, and thence floated down the river Cydnus, which flowed past the town, and was remarkable for the icy coldness of its waters. On the mountain slopes, and on the skirts of these sheltering forests, large flocks of goats wandered and browsed, and the weaving of their hair into ropes and tent-coverings was the principal manufacture in Tarsus itself: Saul, as you know, learnt this art when he was young, and afterwards practised it as a trade. Tarsus was a very busy place; ships came and went, and the quays were generally crowded with merchants and sailors. But theirs were not the only figures that moved to and fro, for many a student mingled in the throng. Learning, as well as trade, found a home in the place, but it was not a learning that made men's lives better and purer. Tarsus was a heathen town, and evil, in all the forms which spring from the worship of false gods, flourished there. Saul's parents, however, were Jews, and must have once lived in

Palestine, but we know nothing about their reasons for leaving their native country. They were strict Pharisees, and could not but be greatly shocked at the way in which the people of Tarsus lived. We do not know how many children they had; only one is mentioned in the Bible besides Saul, and about her very little indeed is said. She married, and lived at one time in Jerusalem, and had a grown-up son, and that is all that I can tell you of her. Saul's father and mother belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and they gave their son a name which had not been used among Benjamites since that woful day when one who bore it lay dead on Mount Gilboa, and David lifted his voice, and cried: *How are the mighty fallen! How are the mighty fallen!*—How different from Saul, the first king of Israel, he was who now, so many many years afterwards, received his name, I leave you to notice as his story goes on. The meaning of "Saul," like that of "Samuel," was "asked of God," and little indeed could any Jew in Tarsus have guessed how completely the name was to be redeemed from all its past painful associations by its new owner!

We may be sure that when the little Saul was five years old, his parents helped him both to read and to understand the Hebrew Scriptures, and that when he was six, he went to school. His training, as a young Pharisee, would necessarily be a very careful one; and you already know that he was probably only thirteen when he became a pupil of the great rabbi, Gamaliel. He grew up an ardent admirer of the Law, and a rigid keeper of it, as far as he saw how it could be kept. Outwardly, he seems to have been always what we call "good,"—I mean steady, upright, and pure-minded. He was naturally impetuous and eager, like the sons of Salome, and whatever he did was done with his whole heart. So "the Letter of the Law, in which he was thoroughly versed, became his idol, and its defence his solitary pride.

Thus, when St. Stephen was charged with 'blasphemy against Moses'—that is, against the law which Moses gave—this Cilician zealot regarded him as an enemy." I have taken the last two sentences out of my other little book, partly because to many of you they will have a familiar sound, and partly because they express exactly what I want you just now to bear in mind. The story of Stephen you know, and you have not forgotten, I am sure, that the people who stoned him to death left the garments they took off in the charge of a watcher who was looking on approvingly; and that that watcher's name was Saul. Now it is important that you should not lose sight of one point in the story,—that Saul thought the stoning of Stephen a right and religious thing. *We* look back upon it with horror, but if we are to understand Saul's history properly, we must try for a moment to put ourselves in his place.

From the blood-stained ground where Stephen, praying, died, the real history of Saul, as we know it, starts, and that is why this is the proper place for an effort to realize his position. I wish I knew how to use easier words, but you may safely believe me when I say that the shortest words are not always the most simple. People sometimes talk as if they really thought they were, but the more I have to do with children, the more sure I feel that it is quite a mistake. I should be very sorry, however, if I thought that the meaning of any *sentence* I wrote was not clear, for I think the sentences in children's books are in some ways far more important than the separate words of which they are made.

Saul, then, we have seen, was not only a Jew, but a Pharisee,—not only a Pharisee, but a zealot among Pharisees. Hear how in after days he described himself: *Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.* And again:—*After the*

most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. He had been born only a few years after That Birth at Bethlehem Which angels came to earth to announce. But he had never seen the Blessed Lord. We do not know where he was, but he certainly was not at Jerusalem, during the years when the Holy One appeared in its streets. He had heard of Him, of course, and was aware of the Death that had occurred on Golgotha, and of the Burial that had taken place in the Garden below the hill. In the Resurrection he had no belief; it was to him but an idle tale, and he looked upon the followers of JESUS THE NAZARENE as a knot of ignorant and foolish people, whose presumption every true Jew should gladly help to crush. For in Jewish eyes, the belief that the Messiah could be a Sufferer was a most shocking thing. But, try as we may, it is very difficult for us, who are so differently placed, even to imagine the feelings of contempt and indignation with which Saul regarded Stephen. No sooner was the stoning over, and the mangled body of him whose face had seemed, even to his worst enemies, the face of an angel, buried, than that fierce persecution began which I noticed briefly in Part II. The little Christian community at Jerusalem was broken up, and its members were hunted, and seized, and scattered in all directions. No retirement availed as a screen, no innocence served as a protection, no house was held sacred. Men and women alike were driven forth to exchange their homes for prison, and, in many a case, to choose between death and denial of their Divine Master. Saul of Tarsus was the very life and soul of this violent persecution; he flung all his natural impetuosity into it, how unflaggingly his own words shall tell. *I verily thought within myself,* he said, long afterwards, *that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of JESUS of Nazareth; which thing I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the Saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority*

from the chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whether any misgivings ever shot through his heart at this time, it is hard to say ; judging by his later history, it seems probable that it may have been so. At all events, if he had misgivings he resisted them. In the next chapter we must follow him on his journey to one of the "strange—that is, distant—cities" of which you have heard him speaking. And the following words of St. Luke will show you that he was not sent on this journey, but undertook it of his own accord :—*Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

He had heard that, far away to the north-east, many of the fugitive Nazarenes had assembled in the beautiful Syrian city of Damascus, and he resolved to hunt them from the refuge they had found there, even as he had hunted them from Jerusalem. They should have neither house nor home if he could prevent it,—no work to which he had once put his hand should be half done,—and so, panting for further vengeance, he hastily collected his attendants, and prepared for the expedition from which he expected soon to return, and in the midst of a much larger company. For would there not be prisoners to bring back with him ? "men and women, bound," who should at least part with one of three things—life, or liberty, or belief that JESUS of Nazareth was the Messiah !

Such were his eager hopes. How they, and he, fared by the way, another chapter must be left to tell.

CHAPTER IV.

DAMASCUS.

DAMASCUS was nearly a hundred and forty miles Jerusalem. I have told you before that in the people travel very slowly. A "journey"—which to us implies as much haste as may be made with discomfort—there means no more than a gradual progress, sometimes steady and sometimes fitful, according to the weather, and the wishes of the travellers, but always slow. This journey of Saul's, however, was an exception to the Oriental rule. Saul was the head and master of the party, and therefore had no will to consult except his own. And his will was to push on at the top of the best speed he could command. He was impatient of all delay, and cared neither for heat nor fatigue, so only that he could feel himself every hour a little nearer the end of his journey, and the beginning of that furious attack upon the exiled disciples of THE NAZARENE, for which he thirsted.

Still, press forward as he might, he was obliged to spend a week in travelling. He did not plod on foot, indeed, like other journeyers of whom we have spoken; horses and mules were at his service, and this made a great difference. But the roads were rough and hilly, and sometimes there would be water to cross, and sometimes a driving wind would blow directly in the travellers' faces, and during the heat of the day the animals would fall into a mere foot's pace, and crawl along wearily and dejectedly. I suppose only those who have felt it know what the burning heat of noonday in such countries is. It is the time for rest, both for man and beast, for any exertion in such a pitiless glare is distressing. But there was *no such thing* as repose for Saul; the last noontide *of his journey* found him, not creeping into the shade

of his tent for shelter, but struggling on, and on, and always on, in spite of the scorching heat, and the stony road, and the fatigue of a long journey's last stage. For Damascus lay before him, not a great way off, and he was not one to pause within sight of an object which he meant to reach. The town, at all times beautiful, must have looked doubly so to the aching eyes of the hot and tired travellers. For there—only just, as it were, beyond their touch—fruit-laden trees bowed their branches over cool water, and broad walnut leaves spread out their tempting shelter; the houses seemed to peep out of leafy shade, and the whole city to lie embowered in coolness.

They were almost there. Yet there was time, and there was space, for a greater and a swifter change to fall upon one of their number, before he should enter those inviting gates, than the grateful change they were all longing for, from sultriness, and thirst, and exhaustion, to green shadow, and water, and refreshment. Suddenly, a startling Radiance flooded their path, a Light so brilliant that the noonday sun seemed bright no longer. Confused and bewildered, they all fell to the ground, but to Saul More had been revealed than the overpowering Glory which filled his companions with fear. In that supreme moment he had seen Him Who is *the Light of the world*, and now a Voice was sounding in his wondering ears. It was The Voice That thrilled Mary of Magdala by Its utterance of her name, That had broken in upon the converse of the Upper Room with Its Peace-giving Greeting, That had called over the water so kindly to the tired fishermen in the early morning. In the Hebrew language, and in tones of remonstrance, This Very Voice was speaking now. *Saul!* It said—and again, *Saul! why persecutest thou Me?* But Saul had never before seen the *Divine Speaker*, so that he recognized neither the *Face*

the Voice. *Who?* he murmured, as he lay still upon the ground, *Who art Thou, Lord?* And from the Glory that had stooped from heaven to arrest him, came the Answer: *I am JESUS of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest!*

Thus, again, were "the heavens opened," and He Whom Stephen had beheld, standing on the Right Hand of God, manifested Himself to the furious foe of all who were like Stephen, and in a moment changed—nay, reversed—his purpose, his desires, his feelings, and his life. Awestruck and amazed as he was, the prostrate Saul found voice for one more question, a question most characteristic of one to whom life meant action. *What shall I do, Lord?* he said. And the Holy One replied:—*Arise! and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.* And then it was over. The blaze of unearthly Light was gone, and—except in the heart of Saul—all was as if it had never been. Everything looked as it had looked before the breathless journey was brought so unexpectedly to a standstill. The burning sunbeams beat as before on the heads of the travellers, and yonder Damascus lay stretched in her beauty, a few steps only remaining between them and the rest they needed so sorely.

But Saul did not see that outward things were all unchanged, for he was blind. The Glory that shone round about THAT NAZARENE, Whose followers he had been hurrying on to persecute, had left him dazzled beyond recovery. He arose, indeed, obediently to the Command which he had just received, but he could not see his way, and one of his attendants was obliged to lead him forward by the hand.

So he entered Damascus at last, but not as he had thought to enter. Not, now, anxious to display his authority, and to strike terror into the hearts of innocent fugitives, but led like a little child, humble, and trembling, and ashamed!

Three days he remained, doing nothing, in the town where he was to have been so active. Three days he was alone, and blind, wrapped in self-abasement, and caring neither to eat nor to drink.

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, writes St. Luke, named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision: Ananias! And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord! And the Lord said unto him: Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus. For behold, he prayeth! and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered: Lord! I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy Name.

But the Lord said unto him: Go thy way! for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake.

What must have been the thoughts of the astonished Ananias when he heard his commission! He was to go to this man, whose very name was enough to fill a Nazarene with dread, and—by the Power of God—to restore to him his sight, which it seemed he had lost! Was it really possible, then, that this Saul, terrible man that he was, who had travelled all this way on purpose to be cruel to every one in Damascus who believed in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, was henceforth to serve and to suffer for Him?

But however he may thus have wondered, he immediately obeyed. And that he obeyed, not in the letter only, but in the spirit, Saul tells us himself. *He came unto me, he says, and stood, and said unto me: Brother Saul! Receive thy sight! And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said: The God of our father*

*hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His 1
and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the Voi
His Mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all n
of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, u
tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized! and wash au
thy sins, calling on the Name of the Lord.*

Very shortly after his baptism, Saul went away t
himself into the wilderness of Arabia. He must hav
wanted to be alone with God, that he might commun
with his own newly-awakened heart, and strive to
seize the full meaning of this mighty Change which
had swept so abruptly across his life. Into such
rugged solitudes Moses, and Elijah, and John the
Baptist had been led, before taking up the great work
of their lives. And One far greater than any of them,
the Most Holy Son of God Himself, had found it well
to withdraw into the loneliness of the silent desert
immediately after His Baptism.

How long Saul remained in his retirement we can-
not tell, but when the Moulding Hand of the Lord
had prepared him for the new great life that lay before
him, he returned into Damascus, and immediately
devoted all his energy and ability to the Cause which,
so lately, he had come there expressly to uproot. The
time for calm reflection was past, and the time for
work had come, a work which was to end only with
his life. *Straightway, says St. Luke, he preached
Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.
But all that heard him were amazed, and said: Is not
this he that destroyed them which called on This Name
in Jerusalem? and came hither for that intent, that he
might bring them, bound, unto the chief priests? But
Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the
Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that This is
Very Christ.*

The Jews at Damascus could not but be amazed
and perplexed at the turn events had taken. For
their disbelief in a Suffering Messiah was as thorough

and as stubborn as Saul's had been, so that the story of What had happened outside the town would be scornfully rejected by them as a fable, even as they rejected that Other Story which had reached their ears, of the Resurrection of JESUS THE GALILEAN.

But it must be borne in mind that Damascus was a long way from Jerusalem, and there was probably nobody in the place who felt towards the Christians—or "Nazarenes"—at all as Saul had felt. Saul had hastened there to kindle the fire of persecution, and not expecting to find it ready kindled. Jews and Christians were living there on peaceful terms; the Christians, you see, considered themselves Jews in the best sense of the word, and their belief in the Crucified Messiah did not prevent their maintaining friendly relations with their neighbours, or attending many of the Jewish services, even as their brethren did at Jerusalem. (It was as *Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer*, that Peter had cured the cripple at the gate, in his Master's Name.) And on the other hand, the unbelieving Jews were as yet slow to perceive harm in people whose outward behaviour was so regular and blameless. Ananias is described as "a devout man according to the Law," and we find that he was respected by all the Jews of the town. Thus we can understand how it was that the extraordinary Change in Saul was only gradually realized, and that surprise and perplexity were the first feelings excited by his unexpected conduct. At first the synagogues were open to him, and it was there, in the very strongholds of the Law, that he preached "Christ, as The End of the Law!"

But for the man's intense earnestness, many of the Jews might almost have fancied that the part he was playing was only a horrible farce, that he was but mocking the victims on whom he would presently spring. For he was known to possess fatal "letters" from the high priest to the rulers of these ve

synagogues through which his voice was ringing day after day. But such earnestness as his could not be counterfeit, and so, by degrees, angry suspicions sprang up, and grew, and gathered together, and astonishment passed away to make room for rage, and it was not long before the bold preacher carried his life in his hand. The Lord was already about to "shew him how great things he must suffer for His Name's sake."

One sunny day in the early autumn I was passing through a lane fringed with noble trees. I saw that one of these trees was doomed to death, for a man was loosening the earth about its roots. It is always painful to me to see a tree cut down, so I hurried past, and hoped that all would be over before I came back. But when I returned, I found the poor tree still standing quite firmly, though every blow of the axe seemed to make it shiver. The man who swung the axe was working languidly; it was a warm afternoon, and the sun shone full in his eyes, and he looked very tired and hot. Just as I passed he stopped to rest, and it seemed suddenly to strike him that if he moved to the other side of the tree, where its wide shadow was lying, he would get on better. I wonder, to be sure, that he had not thought of this before; but I am only telling you exactly what I observed. He saw that he could strike the poor tree more easily if he were sheltered by its beautiful, trembling leaves. So he took advantage of its kind and hospitable shade to deal it deadlier blows, and thereupon his work went on much faster than it had done before.

It may be that Saul of Tarsus seemed to the Damascene Jews to be doing something not unlike what this woodman did. I am not drawing a parallel. I do not mean to compare the tree to Judaism, or Saul to the woodman, for the comparison *would not hold good for a single moment;—the tree, no no farther, was wholly beautiful and kind, and*

therefore very unlike Judaism. I have only put in a little picture just here, in the hope that it may catch your attention, and help to impress upon your minds Saul's peculiar position with respect to the Jews. He was not an "unlearned and ignorant" fisherman, but a man of some standing in Jerusalem, probably a member of the great Jewish Council, thoroughly familiar with the Law, and quite at home in the endless traditions and legends which the rabbis had built up round it. And now he was taking advantage of his position to strike at Judaism from the very ground sheltered by its thickest branches, and so he was able to do it far more injury than one who knew less about it. Something like this, I say, the Jews at Damascus may have felt, for it was quite impossible that they should do justice to the new preacher.

They cast about for means of stopping his proceedings. Some think that one of the five scourgings which Saul received at different times was inflicted upon him now. If so, his first punishment was not a light one. A Jewish scourging consisted of thirty-nine strokes, of which thirteen were delivered on the uncovered breast, and thirteen on each shoulder. But whensoever Saul was beaten, we may be sure that he failed not to remember how he had often beaten others for being what he was now. No punishment could silence him; so long as he stayed in Damascus, he continued to proclaim that "JESUS THE NAZARENE" was the Son of God. But after a little while whispers reached him, or his new friends, that the Jews of the place were plotting his murder; Death's cold finger, they had agreed, must be laid upon his busy lips. Saul treated this information as a call to him to depart, and pursue his work elsewhere. Departure, however, it soon appeared, could now be taken only *in the form of escape*, and escape was far from easy for his enemies were already watching greedily their opportunity, and the utmost secrecy and care

were found to be necessary. At last, as there was no hope of letting him out through the gates, his friends resolved to lower him, in a capacious rope basket, from the window of a house on the town wall. This was happily accomplished—probably in the night—without observation, and Saul found himself once more in the open country.

The basket, in which he had been let down outside the wall, was like those used in collecting the fragments after the Blessed Lord's Second Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. You may remember my telling you, when I spoke of that Miracle, how very large and deep the baskets were.

Thus did Saul creep away, humbly and alone, like a hunted animal, from the city which he had thought to quit so proudly. Once safe from pursuit, he shaped his course for Jerusalem, for he was longing to know and to be with Peter, who could tell him so much about Him Whom now they both called Master. So he must have retraced the very steps that he had taken in such feverish haste when Jerusalem lay behind him, and Damascus was his goal. What thoughts must have throbbed within him! and how overwhelming must have been his sense of the strange contrast between this return to the Holy City and the return that he had pictured to himself when he left it!

CHAPTER V.

PHILIP THE DEACON.

SAUL had been away about three years. Let us leave him for a little while, just as he is on the point of re-entering Jerusalem, and turn aside to notice something that had happened during his absence. Little thinking what he was doing, he had greatly helped, before he left Jerusalem, to spread abroad the *very Belief* which he was trying with all his might

ush. For the Jewish rabbis taught that the pe-
d be studied in all leisure
there St. Luke, the Spirit said unto
they c *thyself to this chariot.* So
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man of such marked holiness
descriptive words, which I pointed out to you *me!*
follow his name: *a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.* The name standing next to his is *Philip*,
and it is about Philip the Deacon that I am going
to tell you a little now. I think what I have to say
will be interesting to you for three reasons. First,
because Philip was so good a man that it will be
pleasant to follow his footsteps, even for a little
way. Secondly, because his footsteps will lead us
into Samaria, and there you will not feel that you are
in a strange country. Thirdly, because they will
take us for a moment close up to that Life Which
was *the Light of men*, and even to draw near to That
is a refreshment. These three reasons lead me to
speak of three others;—those, I mean, which I told
you I had for saying so much about Samaria in the
Second Chapter. You would perhaps like to hear
what these reasons were too, and there could not
be a better place for explaining. Long as it is since
I was a little girl, I remember that I was then always
much pleased if a grown-up person explained to
me *why* such and such a thing was said or written.
For it seemed to me that it was like being allowed
to look into a grown-up mind, just as I could look
over a high paling into a pleasant and orderly garden.

if only anybody would lift me up!—Now that I have long, long been “grown up,” and able to look over the paling, so to speak, without being lifted, I can tell you that many and many a mind is quite as well kept, and as full of fruit and flowers, as the loveliest garden.

So let us go back to my reasons for dwelling on Samaria and the Samaritans in the Second Chapter. I have said that they also were three. The first I did tell you,—that you could not understand the incident which, more than any other, throws light on the natural disposition of James, the son of Salome, unless you knew how all Jews felt towards all Samaritans, and why they felt so. Secondly, I knew that Samaria must be brought before you again when the story of Philip the Deacon should be told. Thirdly, St. Paul, who is the principle subject of this book, was the great Missionary to the Gentiles, and the Samaritans were among the first Gentiles who were taught to believe in the Crucified Saviour. Besides, it was through the action that Paul took as a persecutor, that Light was carried into Samaritan darkness, though it was of course the very last thing that, at that time, he would have desired.

The Seven Deacons all bore Greek names, and some—if not all—of them were *Hellenists*, that is, foreign Jews, or “Jews of the Dispersion.” For a long time the *Hebrews*, or Jews of Palestine, were far from friendly with the Hellenists, but the “love” which the Blessed Lord had said that all His disciples must have for one another was stronger than differences of this kind, so that the Hebrews and the Hellenists who loved and served *Him* could not help working happily together.

Be careful not to confuse Philip the Deacon with Philip the Apostle, to whom, you remember, the Greek travellers came, who were anxious to see the *Lord JESUS* while they were staying in Jerusalem. *Those were Gentile Greeks*, and they probably applied

to Philip on account of his Greek name. Philip the Deacon, on the other hand, was a "Grecian"—or Greek-speaking—*Jew*, and the distinction is well worth pausing to note. For the word *Hellenist*, which, in the New Testament, stands for foreign Jews generally, has not at all the same meaning as the word *Hellene*. The Greek tongue was at that time spoken by a very great many people who were not Greeks. Such differences as these, between the meanings of words, may, perhaps, seem to you little, but they are really large, and the recollection of them is like a welcome roadside lamp to careful readers of the Bible.

After relating what you have already heard, about the persecution of the Nazarenes in Jerusalem, the breaking up of their little Society, and the scattering of its members far and wide, St. Luke goes on to record that *Philip went down to the—or a—city of Samaria, and preached CHRIST* there. He was gladly received; *the people—we read—with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing, and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them, and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city.* It is supposed by many that this was the very town outside which, some eight years before, the Redeemer Himself had sat down to rest, by "Jacob's well." And if this was so, it was no wonder that the people there welcomed Philip. For there it was that his Divine Master had spoken, as never man spake, to a poor, sinful Samaritan woman, who came to the well while He was resting by its side. And she, thrilled by His Wonderful Words, forgot the water which she had come to draw, and hurried back into the town to call her neighbours, that they too might see a Man Who had "told her all things that ever she did." *Is not This*, she cried, *The CHRIST?* She did not invite her fellow-townsmen in vain, and the re-

of their visit to that hallowed wellside was, that they besought the Blessed One to *tarry with them, and He abode there two days. And many more believed because of His Own Word, and said unto the woman: Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that This is indeed The CHRIST, the Saviour of the world.*

Perhaps you are thinking that if such faith as this had been found in a Samaritan city, I was wrong to talk of "Samaritan darkness." But you must remember that Samaria as a province would remain comparatively unaffected by what happened in one even of its chief towns. It must have been more than a year after the Blessed Saviour thus "abode two days" in the Samaritan town, that he was rudely refused admittance into a Samaritan village, to the indignation of Salome's impetuous sons. Philip's story, you see, has soon led us across the Dear Lord's Own Path, though I have not been able to linger in it. I have indeed said as little as I could about this woman of Samaria herself, and have not touched on her history at all, for—as I observed long ago—hers is one of those stories of the Bible which cannot be shortened without being spoilt. Round it twines one of the most beautiful of the Redeemer's Discourses, even as I have seen fair vine-tendrils clinging round the roughnesses of dry bark. One could not draw the dead wood away without bruising and tearing the living tendrils.

Among Philip's many converts in Samaria, there was one whose conversion turned out to be not real at all. This was a man called Simon, who, St. Luke states, had *used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.* His influence had been immense; the people, "from the least to the greatest," believed in him, *because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.* This person was one of the fortune-tellers, jugglers, and

performers of wonderful feats, who are generally called in the Bible "magicians." There have always been a great many people of this kind—and they may even now be found—in the East. I daresay you remember what skilful "magicians" there were at the Egyptian court in the time of Moses. Simon was much concerned when he found that many of the people whom he had so long deceived were being drawn away from him to better things, and were learning to believe in Philip's Good Tidings, and offering themselves for baptism. He began to watch Philip, and was so amazed at the supernatural power which he displayed, that, presently, he too declared himself a believer, and was baptized like the rest. I do not know whether, at the moment of his profession, he was sincere, or whether he was insincere from the very first. For a time, we find, *he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.*

In the meantime, the Apostles had heard of Philip's successful mission, and Peter and John followed him into Samaria. They laid their hands upon the converts there, with the prayer that they might manifestly receive the Holy Ghost, Who accordingly "fell upon" them as He had fallen upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Thus did Salome's younger son, who had once desired to call down devouring fire upon despised Samaritans, now invoke upon them the Living Fire and Light of the Holy Spirit! What a marvellous change was here!

But now the true character of Simon the "magician" showed itself. When he *saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying: Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost!*

But Peter said unto him: Thy money perish with thee! because thou hast thought that the Gift of (



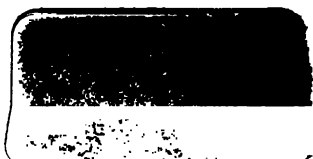
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his chariot, he was reading aloud from the Book of Isaiah the prophet: the Jewish rabbis taught that the Scriptures should be studied in all leisure moments. *Then, says St. Luke, the Spirit said unto Philip: Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.* So Philip ran forward, and as he came close to the chariot wheels, these Words caught his ear: *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His Mouth; in His humiliation His judgment was taken away, and who shall declare His generation? for His Life is taken from the earth.* Philip looked up:—*Understandest thou what thou readest?* he asked. And the reader, apparently not at all surprised at being addressed, answered: *How can I? except some man should guide me!* Perhaps, as he looked wistfully in Philip's face, he read there that his questioner would willingly become his "guide," for he went on to offer him a seat in his chariot, and this was readily accepted. Here, then, was Philip's work, waiting for him! As they drove on together, the Ethiopian owned that he was quite at a loss to know Who was described in the passage he had just been reading. And then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him JESUS. No doubt he told him the Story of the Blessed Life to the very End, finishing with that Great Command to the Apostles: *Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* The Ethiopian listened eagerly; the seed sown fell into the good ground of a prepared heart, and sprang up, and brought forth fruit. By and by the chariot passed a spring of water, welling up into a roadside stream, and forthwith the happy convert asked whether he might not, there and then, be baptized? And Philip, convinced of his sincerity, did not hesitate to grant his anxious request. So the chariot stopped, much, we may suppose, to the surprise



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may be purchased with money ! Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the Sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness ! and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

This solemn and indignant rebuke frightened Simon, and he made haste to express regret, but it seems probable that he was only sorry for having offended men who might, for aught he knew, have power to punish him in some terrible manner, and not at all for having sinned against God.

After this, the Apostles followed up the path which Philip had opened, and *preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans*. Samaria being thus cared for, and a "Church," or Christian Society, in course of establishment there, other work was found for the zealous Deacon. We are told that *the Angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying: Arise ! and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert.*

And he arose, and went. There were two roads to Gaza,—one which led through various towns and villages, and another which lay across much wilder and less inhabited country. Perhaps Philip wondered for a moment why he was directed to take the lonelier road. But, as you have seen, he obeyed instantly, and before long the person appeared whom he had been expressly sent to meet. This was an Ethiopian, of high position in his own country. He was the treasury-master of Candace, the queen of Meroe. This great court-official was a worshipper of the True God, and now, accompanied by his attendants, he was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had probably been staying during one of the Feasts. He belonged to the class called "proselytes of the gate"; these were devout Gentiles, who accepted the *belief of the Jews* without joining in their sacrifices and other distinctive rites. Driving homewards in

his chariot, he was reading aloud from the Book of Isaiah the prophet: the Jewish rabbis taught that the Scriptures should be studied in all leisure moments. *Then, says St. Luke, the Spirit said unto Philip: Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.* So Philip ran forward, and as he came close to the chariot wheels, these Words caught his ear: *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His Mouth; in His humiliation His judgment was taken away, and who shall declare His generation? for His Life is taken from the earth.* Philip looked up:—*Understandest thou what thou readest?* he asked. And the reader, apparently not at all surprised at being addressed, answered: *How can I? except some man should guide me!* Perhaps, as he looked wistfully in Philip's face, he read there that his questioner would willingly become his "guide," for he went on to offer him a seat in his chariot, and this was readily accepted. Here, then, was Philip's work, waiting for him! As they drove on together, the Ethiopian owned that he was quite at a loss to know Who was described in the passage he had just been reading. *And then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him JESUS.* No doubt he told him the Story of the Blessed Life to the very End, finishing with that Great Command to the Apostles: *Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* The Ethiopian listened eagerly; the seed sown fell into the good ground of a prepared heart, and sprang up, and brought forth fruit. By and by the chariot passed a spring of water, welling up into a roadside stream, and forthwith the happy convert asked whether he might not, there and then, be baptized? And Philip, convinced of his sincerity, did not hesitate to grant his anxious request. So the chariot was stopped, much, we may suppose, to the surprise

the great man's attendants, who beheld their master step down into the stream, and receive baptism at the hands of the stranger who had joined him so unexpectedly.

Philip's work here was now done ; no sooner had he returned to the bank with his newly baptized companion, than he disappeared. *The Spirit of the Lord*, St. Luke says, *caught him away*. There was more for him to do, indeed, but it was elsewhere. He found that his work lay next in Azotus. Ashdod was the old name of this town. The Ark of God, you know, was placed in the idol temple there, after it fell into the hands of the Philistines on that dreadful day when poor old Eli watched, and waited, and listened, hour after hour, for the news that killed him when it came. From Azotus Philip travelled northwards, along the coast, "preaching in all the cities," until he reached Cæsarea-on-the-Sea.

As for the baptized Ethiopian, left suddenly alone on the water's edge, he looked around for his new friend in vain. *He saw him no more*, but he could never again be as if he had not seen him. Deeply thankful for all the mercy showered upon him that day, he re-entered his chariot, and *went on his way, rejoicing*. For him "old things had passed away, and, behold, all things had become new !"

CHAPTER VI.

BARNABAS.

IT is time to go back to Saul, whom we left, you remember, at the gate of Jerusalem.

He had fled away from Damascus in such haste that he had had no time to provide himself with what we should call "letters of introduction" to the Christians who had gradually re-assembled in the Holy

City, so that they received him but coldly. *He assayed, says St. Luke, to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.* We ought not to be very much surprised at this. It is true that the changed circumstances under which he had at last returned must quickly have become known in Jerusalem. No captives graced his train. "Train," indeed, he had none. He had gone away to hunt fugitives; he had come back himself a solitary fugitive. He had gone out full of fierceness; he had returned full of love. Instead of inflicting suffering, he had been willingly enduring it. But it is necessary to recollect that in those days, and especially in Eastern countries, news travelled very slowly. Our many means of rapid communication were totally unknown. So that the disciples could only have been very imperfectly acquainted with the incidents of Saul's life during the past three years. And the impressions left by cruelty and anger wear away so slowly!

On the other hand, of course none of Saul's old friends would have anything to say to him now, though their knowledge of what he had been doing in Damascus was also, for the same reason, partial. Thus he must have felt very lonely at first, and like a stranger in the City he knew so well. His only hope lay in the forgiving spirit of those whose Master had been always ready to forgive. And there was one disciple, as you know, who was not afraid to welcome him. Peter, to whom so much had been forgiven, was the first to forgive him. With him Saul spent fifteen days. Peter, it is thought, was living in the house of St. Mark's mother, for it was there that he afterwards went straight,—just as one naturally goes home—when he had been brought out of prison by the angel. He was very fond of Mark himself, and almost looked upon him as a son. Now Mark had an uncle, his mother's brother, who was

called Barnabas, that is, "the son of consolation," or "of exhortation." "Barnabas" was probably his baptismal name, for he is first mentioned as "Joses," or "Joseph," *who*, it is added, *by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas.*

In speaking of the holy enthusiasm which inspired the disciples of the Blessed Lord immediately after His Ascension, I compared it to the "afterglow" that follows sunset. And I pointed out to you the unselfish single-heartedness which led these happy "brethren" to give up their private property, and to "have all things in common." Now in the Bible account of this movement, this Joses, or Barnabas, is the first person especially named as having acted in so generous a way. Although he was a Levite, and so one of a privileged class, he sold his land, *and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet.*

Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, and as Tarsus was within easy reach of that island, it is very likely that, long ago, he had been attracted by its schools, as so many strangers were, and had known Saul there while they were both quite young. St. Luke uses the same words to describe both Barnabas and Stephen, only, in the case of Barnabas, he begins by calling him "a good man." By "good" it would seem that he meant kind and affectionate, and this is worthy of our attention; for just at the point in Saul's story which we have now reached, Barnabas appears as the doer of a very kind act. The disciples were shrinking back suspiciously from fellowship with one whom they had learnt with good reason to dread. And Saul found himself without any means of convincing them of his present sincerity, so that his position, in spite of Peter's noble behaviour, was a very distressing one. But just then Barnabas stepped forward, and spoke for him. Nor did he plead his cause in vain. *Barnabas took him, we read, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord*

and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus, in the Name of JESUS. The assurances of such an advocate as Barnabas were not to be resisted, and Saul's admission among the disciples was secured. *He was with them, we find, coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the Name of the Lord JESUS, and disputed against the Grecians.* In these very synagogues of the unbelieving Hellenists Stephen had once "disputed," or argued, as he was disputing now. And the result was the same in both instances. As in Damascus, so here, the Jews soon began to meditate his murder. *They went about to slay him,* says St. Luke. Before he had been a fortnight among them, the disciples became aware that his life was not safe, and urged him to leave Jerusalem. Saul was unwilling to take their advice, for he longed to do some little good where he had done so much harm. But, while he was hesitating, the Lord revealed Himself to him one day when he was at prayer in the Temple, and said to him: *Make haste! and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me.* And then followed the special commission of which you have heard several times. *Depart!* his Master said, *for I will send thee far hence, unto the Gentiles.*

Obediently to this Command, Saul quitted the Holy City, and was accompanied by "the brethren" as far as Cæsarea-on-the-Sea, whence he sailed for Tarsus. But whether he went straight to his native city, or paused on his way to preach in other places, is not certain. All that we know is, that, go where he might, he *was witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come—that CHRIST should suffer, and that He should be the First that should rise from the dead, and should show Light unto the people and*

to the Gentiles. There is just one thing more to say about this short visit of Saul to Jerusalem. It is that the sons of Salome, and indeed most of the Twelve, were absent from the Holy City when it took place. When St. Luke said that Barnabas brought Saul to *the Apostles*, he meant the leading disciples of the Lord, with Peter and James the Less at their head. We learn this from one of the letters which Saul afterwards wrote.

And now we must retrace our steps once more to the persecution after the death of St. Stephen. I think, if the persecuted Nazarenes could have foreseen what unbounded blessings would spring forth from their sufferings, they would have been quite glad to be hunted and scattered. It seems to me that that persecution was like the high-lying source of a number of clear streams, which, as they flow along, gradually combine into one great, broad, beautiful river. Here is a sentence out of one of the many easy lesson-books which, in these days, make learning so pleasant to children. I daresay many of you know the little book, which is all about "Physical Geography," quite well. *Were you—it says—to ascend some river from the sea, you would watch it becoming narrower as you traced it inland, and branching more and more into tributary streams, and these again subdividing into almost endless little brooks. But take any of the branches which unite to form the main stream, and trace it upward. You come, in the end, to the first beginnings of a little brook, and—going a little further—you reach the summit; (of the rising ground).* We are now going to trace, downwards from the "summit," *i.e.* the persecution at Jerusalem, another of "the branches" which afterwards "united to form the main stream" of Christianity. I wish I could stop here to talk a little about the real meaning of this word "Christianity," which is often so lightly uttered. But I must go straight on. The persecuted Nazarenes, as you know, had dispersed in all directions. They wandered into Phœnicia, they were

to be found in the island of Cyprus, they appeared in Syria, we have already met them in Damascus. At last they presented themselves in Antioch, the large, rich capital of all the Syrian cities. This Antioch was one of sixteen towns, all built by the same person, and all named, alike, after his father, who was called Antiochus. It was a beautiful place, full of fine buildings, and streets, and gardens, and containing a very mixed population, of Syrians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews. Only a few years before the time of which I am writing, a great earthquake had shaken the city, and frightened the people there very much. But this shock had not taught the lesson that it might have done. Life in Antioch, except among the few who were sober-minded, continued to be what it had been before, a life of self-indulgence, and excitement, and thoughtless idolatry. It was in this city that certain of the Nazarenes, who, in their wanderings, had hitherto tried to win only Jews to the true faith, began to preach to the Gentiles in the Name of the Crucified Saviour. *And the Hand of the Lord was with them, we read, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* This good news found its way, in due course, to Jerusalem, and Barnabas was forthwith chosen by the disciples to go to Antioch, just as Peter and John had gone to Samaria on hearing of Philip's successful mission there. We may be sure that his arrival was hailed by the "brethren" with delight, and he, on his part, was overjoyed when he beheld the wonders wrought, through them, by *the Grace of God*. He threw himself heartily into the work, encouraging the converts with all his might, and urging them to persevere. Strength had been granted to them to "turn" to the Lord, and now, he said, they must constantly pray for more of the same Strength, that they might "cleave" to Him. It is in his account of this Antioch mission that St. Luke inserts the description of *Barnabas* which I mentioned to you a few pages back.

The work grew and prospered. So much so that Barnabas soon found that he needed some energetic companion to share its direction with him. And Saul of Tarsus, he thought, would be the very person. So he started in search of him, *and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called "Christians" first in Antioch.*

While Barnabas and Saul were thus busily engaged, some devout disciples arrived in Antioch from Jerusalem. One of them, called Agabus, who was endowed with prophetic power, seems to have come especially to deliver a warning message that a famine was shortly to be expected in Palestine. The mere announcement was enough to kindle the generous impulses of the newly-made "Christians." *The disciples, we read, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea ; which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.* It was this errand that brought Saul again to Jerusalem, just as the Church there had been plunged into fresh troubles. He arrived late in the month of March, to find that James, the elder son of Salome, was dead, and that Peter, who had been so kind to him before, was in prison. How that imprisonment ended you know. But before the Lord saw fit to release His servant, there was a trying period of suspense, which must have seemed dark indeed to all the disciples in the Holy City. And Saul was there to see "how great things" others, besides himself, must suffer for their Master's sake. No wonder that memories of this visit to Jerusalem were ever present with him afterwards.

And now, their commission executed, he and his friend returned to Antioch, accompanied by Mark, that nephew of Barnabas of whom St. Peter was so fond. Changes were at hand, but of these I will speak *in another chapter.*

CHAPTER VII.

PAUL AND BARNABAS.

ONE day, not very long after the return of the two alms-bearers to Antioch, while the disciples were "ministering to the Lord and fasting," the *HOLY GHOST* spoke to them, saying: *Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* The Lord speaks to His people in various ways, outwardly and inwardly, directly and indirectly. On this occasion He may perhaps have spoken by the mouth of some "prophet" who was at Antioch. But in whatever way It came, the Voice was known to be the Voice of God, and It was immediately obeyed. Having been solemnly commended to the care of Him Who had called them, Barnabas and Saul, accompanied by Mark, left the other disciples, and started for Seleucia, whence they sailed to Cyprus. Here they landed, and busied themselves first in preaching at Salamis. Then they went on to Paphos, a town in the southwestern corner of the island, where lived a person called Sergius Paulus, who represented the Roman government. This man *called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God.* But among his attendants there was a "magician," like that Simon who had made St. Peter so indignant, by offering him money, in Samaria. This "false prophet" was named Barjesus, or *Elymas*, that is, "the wise." He did not wish to lose his influence over Sergius Paulus, so he tried to prevent him from listening to the two missionaries. But Saul called down swift judgment upon him for his wicked presumption in attempting to hinder the Work of God. *Behold, he said, the Hand of the Lord is upon thee! and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness, and he went about*

seeking some to lead him by the hand. This proof of supernatural power carried conviction to Sergius Paulus, and he forthwith believed in the God Who had bestowed it upon His servant.

In the story of Elymas the sorcerer, as it stands in the New Testament. Saul is for the first time called *Paul*. And from this time onward he is not called "Saul" any more. He had probably been known by both names when he was a child, and it is not possible to say decidedly why one should be dropped, and the other introduced, at this particular point in his history. Still, reasons have been suggested. *Paul*, or *Paulus*, is a short form of the Roman *Pauxillus*, and the use of the Gentile name, it is thought, may well have been deemed fitting from the time when the Apostle became a missionary to the Gentiles. Some people, again, have supposed that "Saul" became "Paul" simply by adopting the name of the Roman deputy who had just turned from heathenism to the True Faith. But this seems very unlikely.

In Cyprus Barnabas must have felt quite at home, but this visit was only a passing one. Sailing north-westwards, the missionaries next landed in Pamphylia, and halted in the town of Perga. Here Mark turned back, and left his fellow-labourers. Perhaps he was homesick, or perhaps his courage failed him, for the Pamphylian roads were wild and rugged, and haunted by fierce robbers, who wandered to and fro, on the watch for victims. Or again, he may have been longing to be once more with St. Peter, to whom he was so dear. Be this as it may, he turned away, as I have said, and went home, while Paul and Barnabas pursued their journey northwards, as far as Antioch in Pisidia. I told you before how many towns were called Antioch, and this was one of the more important of them. A great many Jews lived here, and on the first Sabbath day after their arrival, the Apostles *attended the usual service in the synagogue.* When

the time came for the delivery of the customary exhortation," or sermon, *the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying: Ye men and brethren! if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on!* Thus invited, Paul did not hesitate to preach. And he preached out of the fulness of his heart. His sermon was very like that one of Stephen's, which had once filled him with such furious indignation. *He Whom God raised again—he said at the last—was no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through THIS MAN is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins! And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which could not be justified by the Law of Moses.* His earnestness was so impressive that the Gentiles among the congregation begged him to preach to them again on the following Sabbath. And many who already believed in the Saviour, of Whom he testified so boldly, followed him when he left the synagogue. These persons were ereupon implored both by him and by Barnabas, *to continue in the Grace of God.* Perseverance, you remember, was the very point on which Barnabas had laid much stress at the other Antioch, and it is plain that he and his fellow-Apostle fully agreed in considering this duty, difficult as it often is, above all things important. Another Sabbath-day came round. And behold, *almost the whole city* assembled to hear St. Paul preach. But the unbelieving Jews were "filled with envy," and began "to contradict and to blaspheme." Then Paul and Barnabas turned and faced them boldly. *'It was necessary—they cried—that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, but, seeing ye put from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of Everlasting Life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles!'* Welcome to this announcement must have been to all the Gentiles who heard it, it only served to make the hostile Jews more angry; they soon began to persecute the preachers, and at last drove them away from

the town. Persecution, however, was powerless to quell either the courage or the happiness of these Nazarenes ; nothing daunted, they started to cross the wild moorlands lying to the north of the Pisidian Antioch, and as they paced along, they *were filled*, in spite of their hard usage, *with joy, and with the Holy Ghost*.

Presently they came to a town called Iconium, and here—as at Antioch—they entered the synagogue, *and so spake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed*. But here—as there—there were many Jews who, so far from believing in Him Whom they preached, hated the very sound of His Name ; these made common cause with the unbelieving among the Gentiles, and raised a storm of opposition to Paul and Barnabas. For some time, however, they persevered in their work at Iconium, and the Lord *granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands*, so that their influence in the place became considerable. But their enemies, finding that insult could not dislodge them, determined to stone them, and so—their very lives being in peril—they were at length obliged to quit their post, and they took refuge in the little town of Lystra, where, as everywhere, *they preached the Gospel*. Very few Jews seem to have lived here ; the inhabitants were chiefly people who worshipped false gods. Still, the Apostles found listeners, and that was all that they cared for. One day, while St. Paul was preaching, he noticed, among his most attentive hearers, a cripple, who, it was evident to him, *had faith to be healed*. Now with St. Paul, to see was to act. One great secret of his spiritual strength was his habit of immediately following up every gleam of Light from Above by the action which it suggested to him. This is not a common habit ; yet any child, who will try, can find out how much is wrapped up in it. Do all that you see you ought to ~~do~~ *do* *in* *the* *light*, whereby to do more, will surely come

And the rule will be found equally good and true, if you apply it to undoing, as well as to doing.

When St. Paul saw the lame man's faith, he acted on the sight. *Stand upright on thy feet!* he exclaimed. Now the man had never walked in his life; he had been a cripple even when he was a baby. Nevertheless, the very moment he heard St. Paul's voice, *he leapt, and walked.* This miracle roused all the enthusiasm of the people, and they began to fancy wildly that the Apostles were two of their imaginary gods, who had taken the shape of men. St. Paul had difficulty in preventing them from even offering heathen sacrifices in his honour. In all haste, both he and Barnabas loudly assured them that they were only sinful men like themselves, merely the humblest servants of that Living God to Whom he had been calling upon them to turn.

But a violent reaction soon set in. "Certain Jews" from Iconium and Antioch, stole into Lystra, and poisoned the minds of the inhabitants against the Apostles, whom they called impostors, that is, persons who pretend to be what they are not. Back rushed the feeling of the excitable people, into an opposite extreme, and they became furious with those whom, just before, they had been ready to worship. St. Paul was seized and stoned, and it was only when he seemed to be dead that their passion was satisfied. They flung his wounded body outside their town, and left it. But life was in him still, and while his few friends were standing round him, and trying to revive him, this brave man rose to his feet, and walked back into the place whence he had been dragged as dead. The next day he left Lystra for a time, with Barnabas, and they went on to deliver their Great Message at Derbe, which was not far off. After this they turned back, and passed again through the several towns in which they had sown the Good Seed, *confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the Faith,*

and that we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God. Again, we cannot help their anxiety about the perseverance of their The start, they well knew, is not the race. thing to turn round, and quite another thing walking steadily onward, *after turning round*, even looking back. St. Paul never lost sight difference between the two.

In course of time the travellers found th again in the Antioch from which they had and, having *gathered the Church together, they all that God had done with them, and how opened the Door of Faith unto the Gentiles.* during this visit to Antioch, which was a long one, that the first signs of what was terrible trouble to St. Paul showed themselves have already seen Jewish prejudices blinding and hindering the footsteps of many a follower Blessed Lord. Now St. Paul was the A freedom, and with all his might he strove to persuade those who were not Jews that his Master had died, and arisen from the Grave men, and was crying to all Gentiles as well Jews : *Come unto Me, ye that are heavy laden will give you rest.* He was always trying to make as easy as possible to the Gentiles to obey this Command can readily understand how any attempt to them could not but grieve him to the heart.] he was working hard at Antioch, to smooth difficulties, and to let everybody see how wide the Gate of the True Fold was standing, "came from Judea" appeared, and began to teach man could be saved from his sins unless circumcised. Paul and Barnabas resisted this with all their strength, and they thought it so that such a great error should be swept away that they went all the way to Jerusalem, to consult Apostles and elders there. On their way

Phoenicia and Samaria, they paused to tell, in every Christian community, of *the conversion of the Gentiles*, and thereby *caused great joy unto all the brethren*. A council, or formal meeting, was called when they arrived in Jerusalem, and after some discussion, St. Peter stood up to speak. He had not forgotten the lesson he had learnt on the tanner's roof at Joppa, and he wound up his speech with a statement of his belief that the Grace of the Lord JESUS was open to Jew and Gentile alike. He was followed by Paul and Barnabas, who declared *what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them*. And then James the Less got up, and addressed the assembly. He was a very grave man, earnest, devout, and self-denying. Since the sword of Herod had sent the other James to be with his Master, he had filled a very important position in the Church at Jerusalem, and his authority was generally acknowledged and justly respected. He now recommended gentle and liberal treatment of Gentile converts, and it was decided to lay down a few rules, to which they should all be required to conform. No countenance was to be given to any one who insisted on their observance of all the Jewish rites. Perhaps I may say that *purity* was the main thought running through these rules,—purity of feeling, and of outward conduct, and of worship. It is noteworthy that they all pointed to things that were *not* to be done. "Doing" would come afterwards, but the Apostles rightly felt that beginners must always start with something simple, so they only required at first that certain things should be left undone. This had been God's Way from the beginning, and they were wise in copying It.

We must not forget, however, that they were guided in their decision by the Holy Spirit Himself. A letter, or what we should now call a circular, was drawn up, which contained an account of the meeting, *and the rules which had been adopted for Gentile*

observance. It was addressed to Gentile converts, and copies of it were to be distributed among them, in order to set all doubts at rest. And one passage in it ran as follows : *It seemed good to the HOLY GHOST, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.*

And now the disciples separated again ; Paul and Barnabas, and Titus, a young Gentile convert who had come up to the Holy City with them, returned to Antioch, and were accompanied by two representatives of the Church at Jerusalem. These were Judas, or Barsabas, and Silas, or Silvanus. Of Silas you will hear more hereafter. They both helped heartily in the missionary work at Antioch for some time, and all who were engaged in the Labour of Love there found the "letter" which had been brought from Jerusalem a great comfort and support. But before long their peace was disturbed afresh. St. Peter arrived in Antioch. Your first thought on hearing this will naturally be that his presence must have added to the happiness of the disciples assembled there. And at first it was really so. He was most friendly with the Gentiles among them, and acted quite consistently with the profession he had lately made at Jerusalem. But after a while he slipped back into his old prejudices. "Certain brethren," who seem to have been sent by St. James the Just on some special errand, came to Antioch, and very shortly proved themselves unworthy of the confidence he had placed in them. For they by no means acted in the kindly and liberal spirit which had breathed through the wise decisions of the late council. On the contrary, they shunned and looked down upon the Gentile disciples, and when Peter saw this, his courage failed him, as it had been wont to fail him in days gone by. He became afraid of what these new-comers might think of him, and began to shrink away from the Gentile converts, no longer treating them

with frank friendliness as before. Even Barnabas was affected by the tone of the narrow-minded men who thus influenced Peter, and—as might have been expected—other Jewish disciples were drifting into the same unkind behaviour, when St. Paul, who was cut to the heart by such conduct, stepped forward, and rebuked Peter sharply before them all. *I withstood him to the face*, he afterwards said, *because he was to be blamed*. His own heart was so full of love, that he could feel all the tenderness for multitudes, which most people feel only for a few chosen friends. “The Gentiles,” to whom he was the appointed Apostle, were to him as his children, and he could not bear to think that any one among them, who wanted to obey the Blessed Lord, should be met coldly, or treated with hardness or pride. I told you before that St. Peter was not offended by St. Paul’s plain speaking. In his heart he knew that St. Paul was right, and that he himself had great cause to be ashamed. His disposition was generous, as you know, and no doubt he was soon thankful for having been corrected. The occurrence broke no link in that chain of holy Love which bound the reprover and the reprovèd together, and both to the Feet of their Divine Master.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL AND SILAS.

BEFORE long, St. Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should start on another journey. *Let us go again*, he said, *and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they do*. To this suggestion Barnabas willingly agreed, but only on condition that his nephew Mark should go too. Paul, however, objected to take Mark, because he had turned back and left them before. *Neither would give way*, and such high words rose at

last between them, that they determined to separate. So Barnabas set out, with Mark, for Cyprus, while Paul chose Silas to be his companion instead of him. The Bible, as I have said on an earlier page, never hides the faults of the people whose stories it tells. The light streams straight down upon each character from above, and beauties and blemishes stand revealed together. Paul and Barnabas had truthfully assured the excitable people of Lystra that they were *men of like passions* with themselves, and now sudden temptation had indeed hurried them into a quarrel of which we may be certain that they both—soon and long—bitterly repented. As far as the cause of the dispute is concerned, there was much to be said on either side; the wrong lay in getting angry, and there they were equally to blame.

Paul and Silas now left Antioch together, and after passing through Syria and Cilicia—where Paul was not far from his old home—and leaving many a group of Christian converts refreshed by their visit, they proceeded to Lystra. Here, where he had been so cruelly stoned, and so nearly killed, before, a great happiness was in store for St. Paul. A disciple was here, waiting for him, as it were. His name is as well known to children as Samuel's. I wonder in how many nurseries, above how many little beds, the pictures of Samuel and *Timothy* hang side by side! Now Timothy had a mother who was worthy of the name. Some one has said that *mother* is too sweet and solemn a name to be used by children commonly and thoughtlessly, and I am not sure that I do not think so too. Timothy's mother was called Eunice. She loved her son tenderly, and had trained him carefully and religiously. Perhaps one reason why she was such a good mother was that she herself had a good mother. And her mother, moreover,—whose name was Lois—was alive. So Eunice had the happiness of training her boy under her own mother's eye. I can scarcely

conceive a greater privilege. What sweet counsel they must have taken together concerning him ! And how Eunice must have listened to the tale of her mother's experience, and leant upon it !

I do not know how long this family had been living in Lystra ; Eunice was a Jewess, but her husband—who is supposed to have been at this time dead—had been a Gentile. About him nothing, beyond this fact, is told us. But it is clear that, from the very first, Timothy had been growing up in the midst of the tenderest and purest motherliness. *From a child*, as St. Paul afterwards reminded him, he had *known the Holy Scriptures*. Two of St. Paul's letters are written to this beloved disciple, and in one of them there is a passage which I will copy, for perhaps a mother here and there may happen to read this little book to her children, and it may well set all mothers musing. After telling Timothy how, "without ceasing, he had remembrance of him in his prayers, night and day," and how greatly he desired to see him, the Apostle goes on to speak of the sincerity of his young friend's faith, and this is how he describes it :—"the unfeigned faith that is in thee, *which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.*" These are wonderful words, both for mothers and children ; I turn from them slowly, as one moves reluctantly away from a beautiful picture.

Dearly as Eunice loved her son, perhaps because she loved him so dearly, she was quite ready to part with him for the Sake of the Master Whom she had taught him to serve. So, when he had been solemnly set apart for the holy work of an Evangelist, the young disciple left his happy home to accompany Paul and Silas in their wanderings. As they passed through town after town, they distributed copies of the letter which had been drawn up at Jerusalem, so that Gentile converts at a distance might have the comfort of knowing exactly what it was that the Church there expected of them.

Thus, always at work, they wended their way northwards. But presently a check came to St. Paul's activity. As he was passing through Galatia, teaching and preaching, encouraging, and uplifting, on every hand, bodily suffering suddenly compelled him to pause. Many and many a sufferer has longed to know exactly what this affliction was, but no one can tell with certainty. St. Paul himself speaks of it as a "stake—or thorn—in the flesh," and such a burden did he feel his liability to it that he prayed three times for its removal. But it was not removed. His Lord and Master answered his prayer with a promise of Almighty Grace instead, wherewith to bear the heavy trial. *My Strength*, He said, *is made perfect in weakness*. Such a Response as This is indeed a far greater help to us, when we are suffering, than any knowledge of the particulars of St. Paul's trouble could be. And as for him, it made his heart leap for joy. *Most gladly, therefore, he cried, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of CHRIST may rest upon me! Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for CHRIST'S Sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong*.

I have said that I cannot tell you what this "thorn" was, but I may say that most people think it must have been a painful disease of the eyes, to which the Apostle was always subject after its first attack. There are reasons for supposing that his appearance was disfigured, and, as we should say, "against him," and nothing is more disfiguring than a disease of the eyes. If this was the affliction, it was probably henceforth always present, but not always in an acute form. There is abundant proof that St. Paul was a very sensitive and nervous man,—in short, what in these days is called "highly strung," and he must have felt the "thorn," which it had pleased God to plant in his life, intensely. Perhaps I had better not let the expression *highly strung* go past without an attempt to explain it

I wonder how many of you have seen an Æolian harp? It is, as its name tells, a harp made for the wind to play upon. But it looks only like a long, low box, with ten strings stretched, between two rows of flat pegs, over the top. Below the strings an opening is cut in the upper part of the box. In my harp, which is a very old-fashioned one, this opening is in the shape of a cross, around which eight very small round holes are pierced. The strings must all be tuned to one note, and then the wind comes and makes music out of their unison. One of the earliest remembrances of my childhood is the sound of the summer wind, breathing upon this harp as it lay in the open window, among the musk and the mignonette. And often now I tune that same old harp, and put it in my window, to bring back the far-away past. When gentle breezes are blowing where they list, I draw the strings up to a high note, but when the wind is strong and gusty, I tune them to a lower pitch. This is because *the higher the pitch, the more easily the harp is put out of tune.* Now warm-hearted and emotional persons, who feel everything intensely, like St. Paul, are easily jarred and troubled; they are "strung" so high that they are distressed by many things which would pass over most people without disturbing them much. Yet although his temperament laid him open to all suffering of this kind, it is not too much to say that without his "thorn" as well, the Apostle could hardly have been the tender-hearted, sympathizing man that he was. Those who suffer most, love most, and those who love most, suffer most. Rough winds of infirmity and trial swept over him without putting his life, high as it was, "out of tune." For beneath, in the very centre of his being, lay the Cross to Which he clung, even as the cross, to which they owe their sweetness, lies under the strings of my Æolian harp.

On leaving Galatia, Paul and Silas altered their intended course in obedience to the Voice of the Holy

Spirit. Looking up for Guidance with every step, they now turned sharply to the west, and pressed forward till they reached Troas, on the sea-coast. *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying: Come over into Macedonia, and help us!* This "vision" made the way clear before the travellers. Luke, "the beloved physician," as St. Paul calls him, had now joined them, and, accompanied by him, they crossed the water, and only halted when they reached the city of Philippi, which was a Roman colony. A woman named Lydia lived here, who is described in the Bible as "a seller of purple." At Thyatira, her native town, a large dyeing trade was carried on, and she earned a living by receiving the dyed goods and selling them at Philippi. She listened eagerly to the teaching of St. Paul, and presented herself, with all her household, for baptism, after which, at her earnest request, he and his companions became her guests. But it was not for long. For, one day, St. Paul cast an evil spirit out of a poor woman who had been hired by some of the Philippians to exercise a skill something like that which we saw Simon Magus and Elymas professing. These men had thus been making an unholy profit out of her melancholy condition, and when they found that Paul had put an end to it, they seized both him and Silas, and brought them before the magistrates. The charge they made against them was that they were introducing customs contrary to the Roman laws. Upon this, orders were given that they should be scourged, and after being, accordingly, cruelly beaten, they were delivered to the jailer, who was strictly charged to guard them closely. He therefore *thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.* But, bruised, and stiff, and bleeding though they were, I need scarcely say that they were not downcast. *Very far indeed from that.*

Night fell, and darkness gathered about the gloomy

prison. But I do not suppose that any of the poor prisoners heeded it ; indeed, when the light of hope has been put out in the heart, I should think darkness must seem to mock less than the peering sunshine. For sunshine always appears to be looking wistfully for an answer,—and it should generally find it, should it not?

Hours passed, and all was still. Midnight came, and the darkest time was nearly over, when suddenly a sound was heard, such as had never echoed through that prison before. Listless captives lifted their heads to listen. What was it? Singing? Nay, but who could have the heart to sing in jail? Yet singing it certainly was, and the attention of the prisoners was soon thoroughly aroused.

Two men were there who knew that no bolts and bars could keep their Master from them; He was just as near within the frowning prison-walls as outside and away, where the quiet fields were breathing forth fragrance, and “nature was turning and smiling in her sleep.” And so, from the stocks and the dungeon, two voices shot up, in songs of praise to God. They had been uttering prayers till now, and prayer had naturally led to praise. The night was passing, and a new day was at hand, a day which—in spite of the place where it would find them—Paul and Silas were not afraid to leave in God’s Charge. They were probably singing some of the Psalms, which, in all ages, have been a comfort to the oppressed. The Psalms were but an echo of that Story which it was the business of their lives to circulate; the “golden key of the Psalter,” it has been said, “lies in a Pierced Hand.”

And so they sang on, and presently an earthquake shook the prison, and lo! *all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.* Forthwith the jailer awoke with a start, and when he found doors standing open, and chains lying harmless on the ground, he drew his sword. Better, he thought—and it was a common thought in those days—to kill himself,

than to face the anger of the authorities, when it should be known that his prisoners had escaped him. But Paul, full of his Master's Spirit, could sympathize with the man who had "thrust" him into the worst recesses of a prison. *Do thyself no harm!* he cried, *for we are all here.* How relieved the jailer must have been at the sound of that friendly voice! But his relief was mingled with the deepest awe. He called in haste for lights, and bringing Paul and Silas out of their dungeon, he asked them, falteringly, what he must "do to be saved?" *Believe*, they answered; *believe on the Lord JESUS, and thou shalt be saved.* And then they unfolded to him the depth of meaning that lay within that word *Believe*; and before the coming dawn glowed red, the grim prison-walls looked down on a strange sight. For the Roman jailer was baptized on the spot,—but not until he had tasted that joy in ministering to others, which is always the first result of belief in Him Who came from heaven to earth "to minister." He who had been so rough and surly, was now gently careful to bathe the wounds of Paul and Silas, and to do what he could to give their bodies ease. Then came the baptism, which his family received as well as himself, and then he rose into very courtesy, and made his prisoners his guests, bringing them into his house, and pressing them to eat and be refreshed.

And now the day broke, and there was a knocking at the prison-gates. An order had arrived, from the magistrates to the jailer, to let Paul and Silas go. We are not told why the magistrates had thus changed their minds, but their message was not received with thankfulness, as they had no doubt expected it would be. St. Paul declined to creep out of jail like a criminal who had reason to be ashamed. *They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans*, he said, *and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily! but let them come them-*

selves, and fetch us out. This is not the only occasion on which we find him pleading the rights of a Roman citizen, but we do not know how his father (who had handed it down to him,) had obtained this "citizenship," highly valued as it was in those days of Rome's pride. If St. Paul had spoken sooner, he would have been spared his beating, but it was not to save himself pain or indignity that he spoke even now. I think it was rather for the sake of his Master's Cause in Philippi, and to strengthen the hands of the disciples there. His reply dismayed the magistrates, for they knew what the consequences might be of insult to any one who could prove, and chose to press, his claim to the privileges of a "Roman citizen." So they hurried to the jail themselves, and begged Paul and Silas to accept their freedom. Then the two prisoners consented to come out, and after meeting and reassuring their friends at Lydia's house, they left the town for another place, called Thessalonica. Luke and Timothy, however, remained in Philippi for a time, to carry on the good work which had been begun there.

At Thessalonica St. Paul took his place in the synagogue, and there, on three successive sabbath-days, he "reasoned" with the Jews "out of the Scriptures," *opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.* A great number of people became disciples of the Crucified Messiah in consequence of his preaching, and among them were many women. When you study the New Testament for yourselves, you will find how largely women helped to spread abroad the Story of that Blessed Life Which is our only Light in this dim world. But there was to be no rest in Thessalonica for Paul and Silas. A disturbance was soon set on foot by "the Jews which believed not," and a complaint was laid before the town council that men who had "turned the world upside down" had made their

appearance here too, and that they, and all their disciples, were acting *contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King, one JESUS*. Some twenty-two years before, the wild cry had rung in the ears of the wavering Pilate: *If thou let This Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend!* And like Pilate, those who ruled in Thessalonica were now troubled and perplexed by the charge with which they were obliged to deal. It is impossible for us to understand how closely dread of Roman power and Roman law was interwoven with every man's thoughts in those times. But though, in the end, the "rulers" did no more than make one Jason, who had specially befriended the missionaries, responsible for their conduct, no real dependence could be placed on their goodwill. So, acting on the advice of their friends, Paul and Silas quietly left Thessalonica, and went on to the town of Berea, where they were kindly and cordially received in the synagogue.

St. Luke says that the Berean Jews *were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few*. The Scriptures which the Bereans thus searched, and which Timothy had known from his childhood, were of course those of the Old Testament only. Nothing could have pleased St. Paul more than that statements in proof of what he taught should be sought and found in the Old Testament. He must have been very happy at Berea. But, again, it was not for long. As, during his first stay at Lystra, his footsteps had been dogged by enemies from towns which he had previously visited, so now his peace was cut short by the arrival of unfriendly Jews from Thessalonica, who "*stirred up the people*" against him. Disappointed *again, and again in danger*, he was urged to fly, and

accordingly he made his way to the sea-coast, apparently without any distinct plans for the immediate future. Silas, however, and Timothy, who had rejoined his friends when he was no longer needed in Philippi, stayed at Thessalonica for the present.

It seems that St. Paul, hunted as he was, like his Master, from place to place, went on board some vessel lying off the shore at the point where he reached it. Knowing that his movements were under Divine Control, he never concerned himself much about passing circumstances, and thus when he found that the ship which lay, as it were, in his way, was bound for Athens, he could only conclude that his work was to be done next at Athens, as indeed it was. And on his voyage thither this chapter must leave him.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM ATHENS TO EPHEBUS.

I SUPPOSE few of you have read history enough yet, to know much about the ancient Greeks. But no one can go very far along the road of learning, without finding out what wonderful people they were. Of course I am not talking of all the people who spoke Greek in St. Paul's day, for Greek was the most commonly employed language then, in many parts of the world besides Greece. I mean the people who gave that language to the world,—the *real* Greeks, or Hellenes. One who has written a book about them, on purpose for children, says that "no race ever did so many different things well as the Greeks. They were the first people who thought of finding out the truth and the reason in everything. Busy men in our own day take pleasure in what remains of the Greek writers of poetry and history; and artists know that they can never make anything more beautiful than what is left of Greek sculpture

“Men will always be interested in Ancient Greece not only because the Greeks were so bright and so clever themselves, but because so many things which we value most in our own life—such as the desire for knowledge, the power of speaking eloquently, and the arts of music and painting, have come down to us from the Greeks.”

Now the city of Athens was the heart of Ancient Greece in her best days; the best of every good Greek thing was to be found there, just as the colour of a rose is richest deep down in its centre. You have read above how remarkable the Greeks were for the beauty of their sculpture. Sculpture is the art of shaping marble or stone into figures and other forms, by cutting and chiselling. The Greeks believed in a great many imaginary gods, which they represented to themselves by beautifully chiselled statues, a vast number of which were placed in public positions in Athens, and St. Luke tells us that St. Paul's *spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city full of idols.*

Greek sculpture expressed deep thought, and that is why all remains of it are so highly prized now. The Greeks did not make ugly or stupid-looking idols; a love of the beautiful lay at the root of their ideas about their gods. The images in which these ideas were expressed were like splendid, nobly-made men and women. It was supposed, however, that the god represented by these statues, possessed great power over human affairs, and that they did not die like men and women. And then, besides these imaginary personages, the Greeks worshipped ideas “in the abstract that is, *by themselves*, apart altogether from beings of any kind. So, when St. Paul looked round him, in the beautiful city of Athens, he saw altars dedicated to *Pity*, to *Modesty*, to *Energy*, and to other qualities. *believe “Pity” was worshipped only by the Athenians. Now perhaps you are inclined to think that*

idolatry of the Greeks was not so bad as other idolatries, because so much care for the beautiful was mixed with it. But indeed it was quite as bad, if not worse, for in it "the beautiful" was separated from "the good," which separation is always a dreadful thing. It was the beauty of outward form, not of inward purity, that the Greeks loved,—the beauty that appeals only to the senses, not the beauty that lifts up the spirit. Everything beautiful, from the violet on the hedge-bank to the sky in its magnificent robes of many colours,—from the innocence of a humble child to the self-forgetfulness of Jonathan or John the Baptist,—is beautiful because it speaks, or ought to speak, to us of God. We see Him through it. It is His Handiwork, and the faint reflection of His Beauty and Majesty. But the beauty dear to the Greeks was a Godless beauty. The imaginary gods they worshipped were pictured as strong and graceful, but not as *good*. The very ceremonies with which they accompanied their worship were corrupt and vile.

I must not forget to tell you, also, that the people among whom St. Paul found himself at Athens were not noble specimens of their race. There had once been far worthier Greeks than those of his day. He was shocked by what he saw and heard, and felt a stranger indeed in such a scene. He was alone too, and everybody knows how much harder trials seem when there is no sympathizing friend at hand to share them. He sent a message back, however, to Silas and to Timothy, by the vessel which had brought him, begging them to follow him as quickly as possible, and while he was waiting for their arrival, he turned his time to good account, in spite of the depressing influences about him.

He began by seeking the Jews who were living in Athens, and to them he preached in the synagogue every Sabbath-day, while in the week he was *continually* to be seen in the Agora, or market-place, ready

to reason with anybody who would listen to him. The Greeks were very fond of arguing, and in the Agora there were always a great many philosophers, and other people with abundant leisure, walking up and down in the shade of the trees, or talking together in groups here and there. *All the Athenians, says St. Luke, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear, some new thing.* St. Paul soon attracted the attention of these busy talkers. Although some mocked at the Story he was telling, a general curiosity was aroused, and he was at last compelled to go up to the top of the hill Areopagus, where from very early times a court had been in the habit of assembling to judge criminals, and to settle grave disputes. Here, where there was plenty of space, he addressed the people who had collected to hear him, and he lost no time in saying how sorry he was to see on every side tokens of worship, in temples, and altars, and images, but no sign of belief in the Only True God. *And as I passed by, he said, and beheld the gods that ye worship, I found an altar with this inscription : TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you !* And he did "declare" Him to them, in the burning words which always poured from his lips when his heart was aglow, kindled by the Theme he loved so dearly. He was heard attentively for some little time, but when he began to speak of the Resurrection of the Blessed Saviour, there was an interruption. Some of the listeners scoffed, and treated the Subject with ridicule, while others said that they would hear about That another time. Their passing interest in the "new thing" was over, and they speedily deserted the strange preacher for something more amusing. Some few, however, believed the Great Story, so that the Apostle had not made his appeal quite in vain. And now he turned away from *his beautiful city, and went to another place called*

Corinth, where a great many Jews were living. It seems probable that he did not wait at Athens for Silas and Timothy, but that they joined him some little time after he reached Corinth. Very likely he left a message for them with his few friends at Athens, directing them to follow him. Their voyage from Macedonia might easily have been long delayed, for it depended both on weather and on opportunity, while we may be sure that St. Paul would not wait for them a day longer than he felt he ought to linger among the Athenians.

At Corinth the Apostle made two new friends, who were named Aquila and Priscilla, and were tent-makers. They had lately been banished, among many other Jews, from Rome, and with them St. Paul stayed a while, and worked with them at the trade he knew so well. At first he did not feel at home in Corinth; perhaps the remembrance of all that he had seen to grieve him at Athens depressed him still. He told the Corinthians afterwards that *in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling*, he had approached them. But when Silas and Timothy arrived, and brought him cheering news of the disciples among whom they had been ministering in Macedonia, his spirits rose, and he threw himself into his work with more zeal than ever, proclaiming, with his accustomed vigour, that he "knew nothing" *save JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified*. Some of the Jews, however, who had heard him preaching in the synagogue every Sabbath since his arrival, now began to "oppose themselves, and to blaspheme." But on the other hand, *Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house, and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized*. And the Apostle was further encouraged by Words of Comfort from his Divine Master Himself, Who spoke to him *in the night by a vision*, saying: *Be not afraid! but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee*. So he stayed on

in Corinth for eighteen months, *teaching the Word of God.*

Before the time came for his departure, a new consul—or governor—of the province of Achaia (of which Corinth was the principal town), arrived. He was a very amiable man, and his name was Gallio. Seneca, a celebrated philosopher, about whom you will read some day, was his brother. The unbelieving Jews now thought they saw, in this change of government, a good opportunity of gratifying their hatred for the zealous missionary who had been persevering, and prospering, in his labours in spite of their opposition. So they arrested St. Paul, and carried him into the presence of the new deputy, charging him with persuading the people *to worship God contrary to the law.* But Gallio treated their complaint with scorn, and bade them begone. And the Greeks, who at all times disliked the Jews, thereupon seized one Sosthenes as their representative, and beat him within sight of the judgment-seat. Gallio, however, regarded the spectacle, as he had regarded the appeal of the Jews, with indifference. It would seem that this Sosthenes had succeeded Crispus as ruler of the synagogue.

At length the day came for St. Paul to “take his leave of the brethren” at Corinth, and he sailed for Ephesus, accompanied by Silas, Timothy, Aquila, and Priscilla. But before we trace his footsteps further, I must tell you that, during his stay in Corinth, he wrote two of those thirteen Letters which have been preserved for us. These were the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians. I shall not attempt to give you any explanation of the Apostle’s letters; it will be better far that, when you are able to enter into them, you should unravel all their wondrous meaning for yourselves. What I want you to do now, is to *know* St. Paul in some measure as a friend, and that *knowledge will explain* his letters more truly than reading *what this person, and that, has thought that they meant.*

When one knows a friend well, and is familiar with his ways of thinking and acting, one seldom fails to understand what he says. But indeed I am fully aware that this little book can only very feebly help to make the great Apostle, even "in some measure," known to you.

A great deal has been said by learned men about the "style," that is, the manner, of St. Paul's letter-writing. It has been examined with the closest care, and described in various ways, but all its critics have seen alike that it exactly reflects what we know of the writer himself. It is a looking-glass, through which one sees his mind. This ought to be—but is very far from being—true of all letters, properly so called, and here much might be said about the charm of what is "natural," and the ugliness of what is "affected," not only in letters, but in all things. But I must hasten on, only adding that one great thinker has compared St. Paul's manner of writing to *thunder*. And indeed it is plain that, no less than St. James and St. John, he was a "son of thunder." He was impetuous, eager, and brave, as full of power as of warm and generous impulses, and often carried, by the strong tide of his feelings, into raptures of love incomprehensible to colder natures. His life was one long enthusiasm. Even as, while the thunder is still rolling, the gracious rain rushes down upon the thirsty fields, so was his vehement indignation against evil followed—almost accompanied—by torrents of refreshing tenderness over those whom he yearned to keep from evil.

This first visit to Ephesus was a very short one. St. Paul was anxious to reach Jerusalem in time for the feast of Pentecost, but he promised to come again if God should will it. He now sailed to Cæsarea, and thence hurried on to Jerusalem. Here, however, he stayed only till the feast was over, and then returned to the Syrian Antioch, thus bringing his *second missionary journey* to a close.

Before very long, he started on a third tour, and again visited the Christian communities in Galatia and elsewhere, *strengthening all the disciples*. After this he paid his promised visit to Ephesus, and here he found work enough to occupy two years and three months.

For the first three months he devoted himself to the Jews of the place, continually haunting the synagogue, *disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God*. But he met with severe disappointment. Most of the Ephesian Jews rejected the Subject of his preaching, and, moreover, openly scoffed at the Gospel, thus preventing others also from accepting it. So that at last he was obliged to seek some other building for his purpose, and presently he established himself in one which was generally used as a school of philosophy for young people. Here, during the remainder of his stay in Ephesus, he gave himself up, heart and soul, to his grand work, and struggled on bravely, in spite of discouragement, sickness, weariness, and opposition. And God was pleased to help him by the gracious bestowal of power to perform miracles, so that his very handkerchiefs, and the aprons which he wore when busy at his trade, carried healing to the sick. He "worked with his hands" to support himself, while he was in Ephesus, because he did not wish to be a burden to anybody.

St. Paul lived in very dark days. I told you, in my second little book, how very wicked the world was just before the Birth of the Blessed Saviour, so need not describe its state here. But we shall never understand how immense, and how hard, St. Paul's work was, unless we keep in mind the vast corruption society against which he was for ever striving, often most single-handed.

Ephesus was especially full of wickedness. Perhaps there was no place at that time where God was dishonoured by the bad lives that people led.

But its very darkness was its claim on the Apostle. He grappled boldly with one form of evil after another, always hoping, and longing, and praying, and refusing to despair, and his labours were not all in vain. By degrees, his repute, as a worker of miracles, a healer of disease, and a conqueror of evil spirits, spread, and rose to a great height, and at last even the Ephesian magicians began to acknowledge the Divine Influence against Which they were powerless. *Many of them*, St. Luke writes, *which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men ; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed.* The conviction that led these persons willingly to undergo the loss of so much money, must indeed have been deep and sincere.

But in the midst of his thankfulness for the success granted to his efforts, St. Paul had many heavy trials to bear while he was at Ephesus. Besides his weak and uncertain health, and the scanty personal comfort which was all that his earnings could command, and his constant anxiety about the people around him, whose hearts he was trying so hard to win for his Master,—he had bad news from Corinth. Many of the disciples there were falling away from the high standard which he had held up to them, and were bringing reproach, by their actions, on that Holy Cause which was far dearer to him than his life. Some of them, indeed, had been listening gladly to the preaching of Apollos, a Jewish convert of Alexandria, who had met St. Paul's friends, Aquila and Priscilla, in Ephesus, before the Apostle himself arrived there, and after learning much from them, had gone to Corinth, to teach others what he had just been taught. But the Corinthians were beginning to think more about preachers than about Him in Whose Name they preached. They divided into parties, each

of which called some particular person its head, and everybody thought that his party was right, and all others were mistaken. And all the time their lives were getting more and more wrong, so that there were few signs of that "perseverance in well-doing" of which St. Paul craved to hear. As soon as he knew all this, *out of much affliction and anguish of heart* he wrote to them, *with many tears*. This letter is called in the Bible "the First Epistle to the Corinthians." In it the Apostle described the life that he was himself content to lead, he reminded his correspondents of what he had taught them when he was with them, he told them how distressed he had been by reports of the unlovely spirit and behaviour which had crept in among them, he answered the questions with which he had learnt that they were perplexing themselves, he assured them of his untiring love, and earnestly besought them to live more watchfully. He flung his whole heart, in short, into his letter, and was doubtless somewhat relieved when he had written it, and despatched it by trusty messengers. Fresh vexations, however, and nearer ones, awaited him.

The month of May was held sacred to Diana, the great goddess of the Ephesians. As the festive season drew near, the silversmiths of Ephesus always expected to sell a great many little images of the goddess, and models of her shrine. But this year, when May came, they found themselves deserted by a large number of their customers. This was in consequence of St. Paul's vehement preaching against idolatry. So the principal silversmith, who was called Demetrius, inflamed the anger of his fellow-tradesmen by declaring that their business would be ruined, if the Ephesians were allowed to remain any longer under the influence of the Apostle. Not only were these men quick to take alarm, but they proceeded to excite the people of the town to be riotous, without telling them clearly what was the matter; thus a violent disturbance was soon created

The whole city, we read, was full of confusion, and had St. Paul once been seized by the wild crowd, he would certainly have been killed. But he could not be found, for his friends would not allow him to face his enemies as he wished. When the mad tumult, however, had at last subsided, he felt that his work in Ephesus was over, at any rate for the present. He had meant to stay there a little longer, but he now saw that he could not do so with safety, so he made hasty preparations for immediate departure, and then, having called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, he bade them an affectionate farewell.

We can easily understand how keenly he must have felt leaving Ephesus, where he had laboured so long under such painful circumstances. But he never wasted pity on himself. *Perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed,* he set bravely out on his travels once more, and turned his face again towards Macedonia.

CHAPTER X.

FROM EPHESUS TO PTOLEMAIS.

WE cannot be quite sure whether, on leaving Ephesus, St. Paul travelled at first by sea or by land. In either case, he moved northwards as far as Troas, where it had been agreed that he should meet Titus after the feast of Pentecost. Titus had gone to Corinth, either with the letter which the Apostle had written to the disciples there, or immediately after its despatch, and he was to bring word how the letter had been received, and whether the advice contained in it had been taken. But, as you have seen, St. Paul had been obliged to leave Ephesus in a hurry, and sooner than he had intended, and consequently he reached Troas before the time appointed for Titus to meet him *there*.

Disheartened though he might well have been by what had just happened at Ephesus, he plunged, with his usual vigour, into his Master's Work as soon as he arrived at Troas. But, all the time, he was in a trying state of suspense about the Corinthians. He wanted so much to hear about them, and to one of his temperament waiting must at all times have been a very difficult duty. All day he preached, and taught, and spent his strength in the Service which he loved, but, as mornings and evenings came and went, and still Titus did not appear, he scarcely knew how to curb his impatience. He tells us himself that he *had no rest in his spirit*. *Without were fightings* against depression and forebodings which threatened to hinder him in his work, while *within were fears*, vague and gloomy, of bad news—perhaps worse news than ever—from Corinth. At last the delay seemed altogether unaccountable, and he became too restless to stay any longer where he was. So he left Troas, and made his way to Philippi, where, six years before, he had been imprisoned with Silas. Here he waited again, and at length, to his intense relief, Titus joined him, and brought him, not what he had been so long dreading, but, on the contrary, very cheering tidings of the Corinthian converts. Remonstrance had produced the desired effect upon them; they, or at least most of them, were sorry for having done wrong, and were amending their ways in obedience to St. Paul's directions. Full of thankfulness on hearing this, the Apostle hastened to write them a second letter, which Titus carried back to Corinth without delay.

In this letter he told the Corinthians how very anxious he had been about them, and with what feverish impatience he had awaited the long delayed arrival of news from them. *Nevertheless*, he added, *God, Who comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his*

coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind towards me; so that I rejoiced the more. And then he went on to say again, in other words, how glad and thankful he was to know that, in spite of his reproofs, they felt all their old kindness towards him, for he would have been sorry to lose any of their love. And he pressed upon them the great duty of almsgiving, with which his mind was just then much occupied. Collections, he thought, should be made regularly in all the Christian communities, for the poor, and especially for the poor disciples at Jerusalem. No duty appeared to him plainer than this duty of almsgiving, and he never lost an opportunity of enforcing it. His teaching on this subject, as on all others, pointed ever upwards to the Blessed Saviour, Whose life on earth is always pleading for the poor more touchingly than any voice of man can plead. *Ye know, he writes, in this letter, ye know the Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His Poverty, might be rich!* Was the claim of the truly poor ever urged so winningly?

But the news brought by Titus had not been quite all sunny; it had its chilly side. St. Paul learnt that, notwithstanding the general friendliness of feeling towards him at Corinth, he had enemies there. These were people like those messengers from St. James the Just, who had given him such trouble at Antioch long ago. Jewish prejudice was at work against him again. We must bear in mind that, all his life long, the great Apostle was peculiarly open to the dislike and unkindness of certain classes of people. On the one hand, there were Gentiles who held aloof from him merely because he was a Jew, and on the other, there were Jews, wherever he went, who suspected him because, being a Jew, he dealt lovingly

and liberally with the Gentiles. Against his enemies of this latter kind, in Corinth, he did not fail to defend himself, in his letter, with equal warmth and fairness. For he was full of misgivings as to the probable effect of their malicious whisperings on the disciples who had already caused him such anxiety. And *finally, brethren, he wrote, farewell! Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace! And the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

This Second Letter to the Corinthians being finished, and delivered to the care of Titus, the Apostle devoted the summer and autumn to a mission in Northern Greece. And when winter was drawing near, he determined to spend it in Corinth, that he might judge for himself how much mischief his opponents there had succeeded in doing among the converts. He had not been there long before he heard that his teaching was being counteracted in just the same way among the Galatian Christians, and accordingly he sat down to write to them, as he had written to the Corinthians. How weary he must have been of disappointment! how his great, loving heart must have sunk when the news came, again and again, that now this disciple, and now that, had strayed away from the straight path! But never did he dream of throwing up his work, or of saying that it was of no use. He only plucked up fresh courage after every seeming failure, and worked harder and harder, lifting the fallen, propping the weak, cheering the hesitating, and looking upwards, all the time, for the only Help that is never unavailing. Results he was content to leave with his Master, Who could shape them as He willed.

One frosty afternoon in the early part of this winter, I saw a most beautiful sight from a friend's window, opposite to which many tall trees stand, in a kind of plantation. Snow had fallen heavily, and the north wind had driven it against these trees.

The frost grew sharper before the wind died, and so the snow clung wherever it had been blown. One of every tall, straight stem was thus white and tapering, the whole way up, from the root to the branches. Every twig was a mass of crystals, and there was not a leaf of the evergreens below that had its spotless burden. Overhead lay a pale, quiet sky; its blue was dim everywhere, and veiled in the distance by a thin haze, but it was untroubled by a single cloud. There was no movement,—no sound,—nothing, anywhere, to mar the profound peace and silence of the stainless whiteness. It was truly an exquisite spectacle,—a very Temple of Purity.

But more was to come.

Suddenly, the sinking sun broke through the western haze, and blazed red and low behind the snow-laden mountain-tation. The white trees flushed into rose-colour, and their stems glowed like shafts of fire. The icy crystals were touched with flame, and gleamed as they gleam, while warm pink shadows crept over the level snow. The sight was too superb to be described. Purity had mounted into Glory.

But presently—too soon, we thought—the Glory vanished. The sun sank, the colour faded, and all was calm, and cold, and stately, as before.

The memory of that scene of unearthly beauty is a possession. I have often thought since how lightly I esteem the frost, and the grand work that it can do.

For it was the frost that made that scene possible—the frost, which we are apt to think of as only unkind and nipping. One rarely sees snow in the perpendicular, you know, especially when the sun is shining, but that day the frosty air was too keen to let it melt. I think St. Paul's presence must have acted on my newly-made disciples as the clear frosty air acted on the snow that clasped the trees in that November sunset. It kept them clinging to lofty aims and to singleness of purpose. But when it was

withdrawn, they too often began to slip, and then lose their hold, and then to slide down from the place which he would have had them keep.

But although he was bitterly disappointed to hear that the Galatians, too, had now been led away by doctrines of which he strongly disapproved, his letter to them shows that he was still gratefully sensible of the kindness received from them six years before. No doubt you remember that when he was in Galatia at that time, his labours were brought to a sudden standstill by an attack of the malady which he called his "thorn in the flesh." We learn from this letter of his, that, quite apart from the affliction itself, he had then suffered sadly from a dread that perhaps his dear Galatian disciples might shrink from him on account of it. So far from that, however, he had been loved by them all the more because of his trial, just as an invalid mother is doubly precious to an affectionate child. *Ye know, he writes, how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first; and my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as CHRIST JESUS. What was, then, the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me!*

All this shows us how warmly grateful St. Paul was for any kindness. He was acutely sensitive, as I have said before, and he felt roughness and unkindness more deeply than most people do. But he was quick to feel any touch of gentleness too, and to respond to it, just as the strings of the Æolian harp tremble, and whisper music, when the lightest summer breeze brushes them. It is always so. Have you never noticed how, when a soft shower comes after a wild wind has been sweeping about a garden, the plants that bent lowest, and shivered most, in the wind, seem to be most refreshed by the kindly rain?

But about this letter to the Galatian Christians, which St. Paul was careful to word throughout most plainly, I must only wait to say a very little more.

After showing his correspondents that he was not forgetful of the kind way in which they had treated him, the Apostle passed on to suggest, very gently, that they, on their part, should be careful not to forget what he had taken such pains to teach them. For *it is good*, he wrote, *to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.* And the Galatian converts, as you know, were not the only people who stood in need of the wistful reminder.

Let us not be weary in well-doing! says this wonderful letter, as it is drawing to a close, *for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not!* Who had ever more cause to be weary than the writer? Who could know better how hard it often was not to "faint"? Yet how brave, how cheery, how confident the words are! To hundreds and hundreds of tired people, besides the flagging Galatians, they have brought a revival of hope, and of the energy that springs from hope,—even as the sweet April rain re-awakens the courage of the poor drooping primroses that began to flower so early, and did their very best, but have nearly lost all heart in the long March struggle with east wind, and dust, and dryness.

While St. Paul was at Corinth this time, he found that a person named Phœbe, a member of the Church at Cenchrea, a sea-port some eight or nine miles away, was about to sail, on business of her own, to Rome. Here was an opportunity of sending a letter to the Christians living there, many of whom the Apostle seems to have known elsewhere at different times, though—as yet—he had never been to Rome himself. He was not the man to lose an opportunity, so he forthwith wrote his "Letter to the Romans," and Phœbe willingly undertook to deliver it.

Three busy months at Corinth had nearly passed away, and the Apostle was looking forward to keeping

the Passover feast at Jerusalem, where, also, he was anxious to see the money safely deposited which he had long been gradually accumulating for "the poor brethren in Judea." But at the last moment he was obliged to change his plans. For when he was almost ready to start, it was discovered that some of the Corinthian Jews were plotting to kill him. Now his intention of going straight from Corinth to Jerusalem was probably known to these enemies, so that he felt compelled to alter his route, and he accordingly went, first, back to Philippi again, accompanied by several companions, some of whom had the charge of the alms-money already mentioned. At Philippi he remained till the Passover was over, and then crossed with St. Luke to Troas.

Here they stayed to spend the Sabbath, and on the evening of that day a little crowd of disciples collected to hear St. Paul preach. They assembled in an upper room, where, as the hour grew late, lamps were duly lighted. But it was a soft spring night, and the windows had been left open, that the cool breath of the sea might find its way in. Midnight came, and still the preacher was pouring forth his glowing words, and still the listeners—all save one—were straining their ears to catch his every syllable. All save one,—and he was asleep. This "one" was a lad called Eutychus, who was sitting on one of the wide low window-sills. Drowsiness overcame him by slow degrees, until at last he lost all consciousness, and presently every one was startled by the noise of a heavy fall. Eutychus had disappeared. He had fallen out of the open window, and when those who were the first to reach him lifted him from the ground he was found to be dead. This was a melancholy interruption indeed. But St. Paul hurried down to the courtyard, and stooping over the youth, he embraced him, and presently looked up with comfort in his face. *Trouble not yourselves!* he said to the bystanders, *for his life is in him.* And it was even so.

After this the Apostle went back to the "upper room," and lingered there with his many friends, till the lamps burned low and the dawn was at hand. At last, after a solemn Breaking of the Bread with those from whom he was about to part, and many loving farewells, he was really obliged to go, and he set out for the port of Assos, about twenty miles distant from Troas.

From Assos he sailed southwards, touching at several places on the way, till he came to Miletus, which was within fifty miles of Ephesus. Here, by his own desire, the elders of the Ephesian Church came to meet him, and the interview was a very affecting one. For St. Paul was sure now that "bonds and afflictions" were in store for him, and this certainty made every parting unusually solemn, for he could not tell that it might not be the last. *But none of these things move me*, he said, cheerfully, to the Ephesian elders, *neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone, preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.* And then he implored them to remember how he had taught, and trained, and warned, and guided them. Nor was he afraid to appeal to the example of industry, and of charity made possible by industry, which he himself had set them while he was living at Ephesus. *Ye yourselves know*, he cried, *that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that, so labouring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the Words of the Lord JESUS, how He said: It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

At last it was time to tear himself, however unwillingly, away. So he knelt down, and prayed with his sobbing friends, and commended them to God's Fatherly Care: and they "fell on his neck" in floods

of tears, "and kissed him." The thought that this might indeed be a last farewell was terrible to them. They followed him to the very edge of the shore, and we may be sure that, long after they lost sight of the beloved "bent figure, and worn and wasted face," they continued to gaze longingly after the retreating vessel which was carrying their best friend away from them.

Having been disappointed in his hope of keeping the Passover at Jerusalem, St. Paul was now anxious to be there before the feast of Pentecost. And as winds and tides were favourable, he soon found that this purpose could be accomplished with ease. At Patara he left the vessel which had brought him from Miletus. Very likely she was going no further, or perhaps her course beyond this point did not fall in with his plans. But another ship was on the point of sailing from Patara when he arrived there, and as she was going first to Tyre, and then southward along the Phœnician coast, he took his passage in her without hesitation.

At Tyre this vessel waited to discharge her cargo, so that her passengers had a week to spend there. The delay was of no consequence to St. Paul, for he knew that he had plenty of time to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost; the week passed very happily to him in the society of the Tyrian Christians, and still more happily to them, for during his short visit he won all their hearts. So thoroughly did he endear himself to these disciples, that when the day of departure came he was accompanied to the beach by a goodly throng, including many women and children, all grieving much that they could keep him among them no longer. These friends knelt down with him, at length, close to the waves which were about to part them from him, and they prayed a last prayer together. And then he and his companions "took ship," and the sorrowful watchers who were left on the shore returned to their homes.

Twenty-eight miles below Tyre was the port of Ptolemais, and here the Apostle's voyage ended, for the rest of his journey was to be by land. He accordingly left the ship, with his fellow-travellers, and they stayed one whole day in the town before setting out, on foot, for Cæsarea-on-the-Sea. For in Ptolemais, too, there were "brethren." And wheresoever worshippers of JESUS THE NAZARENE were to be found, there St. Paul, His faithful soldier and servant, was sure to be heartily welcomed. The merest glimpse of such an exalted life as his, full of burning zeal and adoring love, must have been a rare privilege. It is easy to imagine how a thrill of new vigour would run through any Christian community after a passing visit from him. The most timid and faint-hearted disciple could scarcely help being inspired by his noble example.

Watch ye! he cried, *Stand fast in the faith! Quit you like men! Be strong! Let all your things be done with charity!*—Grand precepts, indeed! But influence does not lie in precepts. The source of St. Paul's power over other men was this—that he himself was always to be seen acting as he called upon them to act.

CHAPTER XI.

AT JERUSALEM AND CÆSAREA.

FROM Ptolemais the little company travelled, on foot, to Cæsarea-on-the-Sea. It was to this place, you recollect, that we traced Philip the Deacon, in the fifth chapter. And it was as his honoured guest that St. Paul now stayed for a short time in the town.

Philip had four daughters, all truly devout, like himself, and endowed, moreover, with the gift of prophecy. It requires no effort to picture to ourselves

the thankfulness of the weary Apostle for a welcome into such a household, and the comfort which Philip's sympathy must have afforded him. The experience of "the evangelist of the Samaritans," as Philip sometimes called, had fitted him in a peculiar manner to enter into his great guest's many conflicting feelings. So this little pause at Cæsarea must have been a rest to St. Paul's spirit, as well as to his body. But before the visit was over, Agabus, the prophet, presented himself at Philip's house. We saw him last at Antioch, where, you remember, he foretold the Judean famine. He had been a messenger of warning then, and he was a messenger of warning now. Taking off St. Paul's girdle, he bound his own hands and feet with it, and declared that, in like manner, St. Paul himself should be bound by Jews at Jerusalem, and delivered into the power of Gentiles. This ominous prediction greatly disquieted all who heard it. Only one among them preserved his accustomed cheerful collectedness. That one, it is hardly necessary to tell you, was the Apostle himself. *What mean ye?* he asked—looking round upon his disturbed friends, as first one, and then another, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem,—*What mean ye, to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die, at Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord JESUS!*

Ready indeed he was, for life or for death.

To live on, enduring pain, and bondage, and mockery, and shame, would be but a small thing to him, after all, seeing that the only crown ever worn on earth by his Beloved Master had been a Crown of Thorns!

And yet the thought of death was sweet! not, truly, as an escape from toil and trouble, but as the entrance into the Immediate Presence of that Master, Whom *should find crowned, not now with thorns, but*
"Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power

I am in a strait betwixt two, the noble Apostle afterwards wrote to his friends at Philippi, *having a desire to depart, and to be with CHRIST, which is far better : nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.* Living or dying, then, no power could drive him from the Blessed Service of Him Whom, for one dazzling moment, he had seen on the road to Damascus, and to Whom he had straightway given himself, body and soul. *To me*, he once cried, joyously, *to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain.*

Thus his resolution was not to be shaken. To Jerusalem he was determined to go, because he felt assured it was God's Will that he should go. And when once this was clearly perceived, no one tried any more to dissuade him. *We ceased*, writes St. Luke, *saying : The Will of the Lord be done !*

So St. Paul took leave of his kind host, and of his other friends at Cæsarea, and set out for the Holy City, willing, with all his heart, to be "bound," even as he had once hoped to bind many "men and women," because they were Nazarenes. This was the last stage of his last journey, as a free man, for more than four years. The land was brightly carpeted with a thousand fair spring flowers, the warm air was gay with the hum and song of bees and birds, and the roads—as usual just before a festival—were crowded with pilgrims, all pressing forward towards Jerusalem. Among them the Apostle—a real pilgrim, for his whole life was a pilgrimage—walked manfully on, to meet the impending evil, which looked the darker because it was vague. He could neither see its shape, nor define its limits, nor tell how near it was. And yet he quailed not. His faith and love conquered his temperament, and how mighty a conquest that was *it is impossible for children to understand.* *Let me try to explain this*, for perhaps it may sound disappointing, *and I should be grieved to damp any of your endeavours to see this great, grand man as he really w:*

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whose vows were within seven days of completion. And he was strongly advised to take their expense upon himself. If he agreed to do so, it would be part of his duty to associate with them during the seven days' interval, as well as to accompany them daily to the Temple, and to be present with them when the offerings were actually made. So public a step, or series of steps, would certainly go far towards an emphatic denial of the charges lodged against him, and would also be a movement of conciliation towards the Jews generally, and the Jewish believers especially. He saw this, and having at once assented to the proposal, lost no time in giving notice of his intention to the priests.

Four days passed away. St. Paul spent them most inoffensively, doing his very best to avoid irritating the Jews. *They neither found me—he said afterwards—in the Temple, disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the Synagogues, nor in the City.* But his caution was all in vain. He had been seen walking in the streets with one of his travelling-companions, an Ephesian convert called Trophimus, and on the fifth day, as he was passing, apparently alone, through the Temple courts, a party of Jews—probably of Ephesus—sprang upon him, falsely protesting that he had brought Gentiles into the Sacred Place. In the agitated state of the popular feeling, such a cry was quite enough to create a serious riot. In a moment, St. Paul was surrounded, seized, and forced, in the midst of the wildest excitement, down the flight of steps that led into the outer court.

Here he was unmercifully beaten, and would soon have been killed, if not torn limb from limb, but for a *timely interruption*. Suddenly, the clash of arms was heard, and at that sound even furious Jews had learnt to cower. The sentries at the Temple gates had given the alarm, and with all possible promptitude

detachment of Roman soldiers appeared upon the scene, commanded by an officer named Claudius Lysias. St. Paul was rescued from the grasp of his frenzied enemies, but—failing to understand what really was the matter—Lysias ordered him first to be chained by the wrists to two soldiers, and then to be removed into the fortress. Meanwhile, *all the city*, we read, *was moved, and the people ran together*. And as the soldiers led their prisoner towards the barracks, the fierce multitude closed in behind them, shouting:—even as another such multitude had once cried after the Redeemer of the world,—*Away with him! Away with him!* So great, at last, was the pressure of this frantic mob, that the Apostle was swept completely off his feet, and the soldiers were obliged to bear him by sheer force up the tower stairs. But as they neared the top, he took advantage of a moment's breathing-time, to ask the commandant if he might, there and then, stop, and address the crowd. The request astonished Lysias, but when he understood that the petitioner was a Jew of Tarsus, *a citizen*, as he said, *of no mean city*, he gave the desired permission, and thereupon St. Paul turned, and spoke in Hebrew to the people who were passionately clamouring for his death. *Men, brethren, and fathers!* he cried, *hear ye my defence, which I make now unto you!* Instantly, there was a hush. As a sobbing child ceases to sob when he catches even the distant sound of his mother's beloved step, so the wild Jews were quieted by the first familiar accents of the language so dear to them. And the Apostle was not interrupted while, weary, and bruised, and chained as he was, he poured forth into the ears of his strange audience the thrilling story of his life. He told, unchecked, how the Most Holy JESUS of Nazareth Himself had stood in the path to Damascus. He related how He had again appeared to him, after he returned, a changed man, to Jerusalem,—and this, too, was allowed

pass. But when he went on to tell of the Charge then given him to preach to the Gentiles, the respectful silence was rudely broken. At the mere name of the *Gentiles*, the fierce passions of these fickle Jews were let loose again. *Away! they shrieked once more, Away with such a fellow from the earth! for it is not fit that he should live.* This new uproar bewildered the commandant. For he did not understand Hebrew, and so could only suppose that his prisoner must have done some great wrong, the very mention of which infuriated the Jews. Scarcely knowing what to do next, he ordered him to be scourged, in the hope of extracting from him, under that torture, at least a confession of his offence. But just as the first blow was about to be struck, St. Paul mentioned that Roman citizenship of his, which had stood him in such good stead at Philippi. Upon this, Lysias withdrew his order for the scourging, though more perplexed than ever by the plea, for his own rights as a Roman citizen had cost him dear, and he wondered greatly how such privileges could have fallen to the lot of this poor Tarsian Jew. The next day, still determined to have the strange frenzy of the Jews explained, if possible, he *commanded the chief priests, and all their council, to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.* But the Apostle had scarcely opened his lips in his own defence, when, by order of the high-priest, a blow was roughly dealt him on the mouth. After sternly protesting against such lawless treatment, he began afresh to make his appeal to the better sense of the assembly. No sooner, however, did he mention "the Resurrection of the Dead," than a hot dispute sprang up among the councillors. For some of them were Pharisees, and some were Sadducees, and these *two parties held directly opposite opinions about all that lies beyond the grave.* Lysias soon perceived *that nothing would be gained from such a meeting and, fearing that St. Paul might be hurt, or ev*

"pulled in pieces" in the confusion, he sent a party of soldiers to bring him safely back into the barracks. And that night, as the exhausted captive, chained, and helpless, and sorely needing comfort, was sleeping in his prison, *the Lord stood by him, and said: Be of good cheer, Paul! for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome!*

The next morning, a nephew of the Apostle—a son of the sister before mentioned—made his way past the sentries, into the barracks. He brought the tidings that more than forty of the leading Jews had bound themselves by a solemn oath, of which the chief priests were aware, neither to eat nor to drink until, by one device or another, they had succeeded in killing St. Paul. When Lysias heard this, he made up his mind to place his prisoner at once beyond the reach of these would-be murderers, and at the same time to refer his case to Felix, then the procurator of Judea.

Accordingly, shortly after nine o'clock the same evening, the Apostle was on his way back to Cæsarea, surrounded by a strong guard of soldiers. Philip the Evangelist, his kind-hearted friend and late host, must have been sadly startled at seeing him, after so short an absence, pass through the streets a fettered prisoner. A letter from Lysias explained his sudden appearance to Felix, who, briefly remarking that he would hear his case on the arrival of his accusers, dismissed him without further parley into a guard-room close at hand, there to await his examination.

For more than two years, the Apostle remained under arrest at Cæsarea. "Accusers" came indeed from Jerusalem, with no less a personage than the high-priest at their head, and complained that they had found him *a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes*, nor did they hesitate to affirm that he had "gone about to profane th

Temple." But Felix, who was no lover of the Jews, allowed St. Paul to defend himself, which he did so successfully that, in common justice, he ought to have been acquitted. Instead of this, however, he was detained on the pretext that the evidence of Lysias was wanted to complete the case. Felix was probably afraid of enraging the Jews by liberating him, for he was already unpopular with them, and wished to avoid an open rupture as long as possible. He seems to have been really interested in the Apostle, and kindly disposed towards him, for he ordered the centurion in charge of him to treat him with every consideration. He often sent for him, too, *and heard him concerning the Faith in CHRIST*. His slumbering conscience began at last to stir slightly within him, and we read that when St. Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," he even *trembled, and answered: Go thy way for this time! when I have a convenient season I will call for thee*. But, as far as we know, he never went beyond "trembling." His life grew no worthier. He was not even above hoping that his prisoner might in the end pay him to set him free!

Thus time went on, until Felix at length became the object of such hatred in Judea, that he was recalled to Rome, there to reply, as best he might, to the charges lodged against him. And the Apostle, to whom his promises had been so fair, he left behind him, still under guard, at Cæsarea.

Felix was succeeded by one Porcius Festus, who entered on his new duties with great activity. Only three days after reaching Cæsarea, this new procurator started for Jerusalem. It was soon evident that the mad hatred of the Jews there for St. Paul had not *grown fainter* with the lapse of time. Festus was *entreated to give an order for his removal to the Holy City*. *Had this petition been granted, the Apostle would have been waylaid and murdered on the ro*

But Festus would promise nothing, except to preside in person at a fresh trial of the case on his return to head-quarters. He kept his word. Again a deputation of the remorseless Jews journeyed to Cæsarea, and there *laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.* And again, he, on his part, boldly denied all their accusations. *Neither against the law of the Jews, he said, neither against the Temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all!*

Festus was not open to bribes, like Felix. He seems to have desired to be just in the main. But he did not wish to thwart the Jews too pointedly in these early days of his rule over them, so he proposed to the Apostle that he should go up to Jerusalem, and there be tried by the Jewish council in his own protecting presence. But to this St. Paul would not consent. Rather than trust himself in the hands of the Jews, who, he well knew, were thirsting for his blood, he chose to fall back once more upon his rights as a Roman citizen, and to refer his case to the emperor. *I appeal*—he exclaimed—*unto Cæsar!* This step, no doubt, took Festus quite by surprise; but, as he was fully aware, there was no gainsaying it, so arrangements were at once set on foot for the safe conduct of the Apostle to Rome.

Now while preparations were being made for the voyage, Herod Agrippa II., King of Chalcis, arrived at Cæsarea with his sister, to pay a visit to the new procurator. He, being a Jew, was thoroughly familiar with Jewish habits of thought, and so Festus laid the whole story of St. Paul, as far as he knew it, before him. And Agrippa said that he should like to see the prisoner with such a strange history. So the next day, Festus and his grand guests, with all their attendants, assembled in state, and St. Paul was brought before them. And in the presence of this brilliant circle, he told his tale again. How he

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time entrusted with the care of the Ephesian Church, and also his Letter to Titus, who was then stationed in the island of Crete. But, by and by, a dreadful persecution of the Christians broke out at Rome, and a deadly hatred of their very name spread far and wide. They were accused of all sorts of crimes without cause, and thus it became easy for St. Paul's enemies to indulge their malice against him afresh. He was suddenly arrested at Troas, and soon carried back to Rome, and thrown into a dungeon there. All the little solaces which had made his first imprisonment tolerable, were wanting now. He was all but alone, as far as human society was concerned, and severely treated, and in his own mind he was firmly convinced that he had nothing but death to expect. In due time he was brought to trial, but again his defence of himself was so able, and so transparently truthful, that it was found impossible to condemn him. Nevertheless, he was not released. Arrangements were made for a second hearing of the case, and he knew full well that it was determined to find some pretext for taking his life. Sad as his circumstances were, however, he himself was not sad. He contrived to write, from his prison, a Second Letter to his beloved Timothy, whom he had a lingering hope that he might yet be spared to see just once more if only he could come soon. *I am now ready to be offered, he wrote, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith! Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His Appearing.—Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me!*—Whether the Apostle's longing to see Timothy again was ever satisfied, we do not know. The weeks went by, and at length—how long after he wrote that last loving letter I cannot tell you—he was again summoned from his dungeon to a so-called trial, and this time,

he had anticipated, he was condemned to die. The Jews had their way at last !

Even in death a Roman citizen had his privileges, and to torture St. Paul, as so many Christians had lately been tortured, would have been to infringe them. So he was at least saved the agony of a lingering dying.

One day, under the blue sky of a Roman June, when fair flowers were covering the earth, and to live might well have seemed to many a man sweeter than to die, a guard of soldiers marched out of the city, and a little way along the road leading to the sea. In their midst walked a figure, bowed with many infirmities, and marked with the scars of much hard usage, all borne right gladly for his Master's Sake. But it was nearly over now, and the great, patient Apostle was going Home at last. Presently the little procession halted,—it had not moved far,—and in a few minutes it was time for him to kneel down, and to lay his weary head upon the waiting block. And then, one of the soldiers stepped forward. And suddenly a sword gleamed swiftly,—and rose,—and fell,—and St. Paul was gone.

Gone, to his Beloved Master's Nearer Service.

“Tradition” is the name given to intelligence which has been handed down, by word of mouth, from one generation to another. Such intelligence naturally changes in character in the course of ages. By degrees, some details are forgotten, and then, sometimes they are left out altogether, and sometimes their place is filled with fresh ones. So that much dependence cannot be placed on the stories of tradition as a whole, though there are elements of truth in many, perhaps in most, of them.

Tradition says—but remember, I cannot say how truly—that St. Peter, too, suffered martyrdom about this time, at Rome. Some people even believe th

the two Apostles were put to death on the same day. But wherever St. Peter died, there is good ground for believing that it was by crucifixion. It is said that he was crucified with his head downwards, by his own request, because he felt unworthy to die in the same way, exactly, that his Lord had died. And whether this is true or not, the feeling and the desire attributed to him are at least quite in keeping with all that we know of his character.

The Bible, and especially the New Testament, says very little about the way in which people died, but a great deal about the way in which they lived. St. James the Great, as I have already said, is the only one of the Apostles whose death it even records. So that the particulars which we know, or think we know, about the deaths of the others, are gathered partly from history, and partly—chiefly—from the legends with which tradition presents us.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

THE story of St. James the Great is also, as far as it goes, the story of St. John the Divine. Both brothers were chosen by the Blessed Saviour, and apparently for the sake of the same characteristics, to be in a special manner His companions. Both were "sons of thunder"—energetic, impulsive, warm-hearted, full of fire and force. Both were present on each of those occasions in the Blessed Life, when only three eye-witnesses were admitted. Both served their Master to their lives' ends.

St. John, indeed, appears to have been a disciple of the Lord before the Call of his elder brother. It is supposed that he went, with Andrew, his father's partner, to the crowded river-banks when first the cry of the Baptist startled the countryside. He wanted to

Hear what it was that the strange preacher was saying. And when he heard it, he believed it, and when he believed it, he obeyed it. Then came the evening when, attracted by his new teacher's sudden and devout exclamation : *Behold the Lamb of God !* he turned, and—for the first time—saw Him without Whom he was soon to find that he could not live. From the night into which that evening deepened, real life for St. John dated. Hour followed hour, and still both he and Andrew lingered, as on enchanted ground, in that twig-woven hut by the river, which sufficed to shelter the Maker of all worlds. And you know how, thenceforward, the Most Holy Presence Which had drawn them, so mysteriously, within Its Power, was evermore their Loadstar.

St. John the Evangelist, or the Divine, is very commonly called the Apostle of love. The force of his character was imprinted on his affections. Love was the channel into which his natural impetuosity learnt, ever faster and faster, to flow. And the stronger and the steadier a current, the deeper its channel becomes, so that before St. John's long life approached its end, he seemed to those who knew him to be *all love*. Stories are told of the wonderful way in which the very animals became aware of this boundless love, and of the safety which it ensured for them. It is said that when the Apostle was a very old man, he had a pet partridge, which sat on his shoulder, and fed out of his hand, and that he was seldom to be seen without it. Children, also, loved him dearly, and would run to him as soon as he came in sight, and look trustfully up into his face for the smile which never failed them. But though he was so gentle, you must never think of him as weak—except, indeed, in body—in *his old age*. On the contrary, he had never been so strong. All the old fire was there, only it was consecrated fire now. His character, strong to begin with, had been gaining, not losing, in vigour, all his

through. Listen to this passage in a letter which he wrote when he was very old :—*Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith ! Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that JESUS is the Son of God ?* One can hear the trumpet-ring from the first word to the last ! *Overcome* was the old man's very watchword. And no one knew better than he all that the word meant,—the battles, and the falls, and the fresh struggles after the falls ! For evil, in its every form, had been his deadly enemy for years and years, and, like St. Paul, he had indeed "fought a good fight" against it.

After that sunny morning at Capernaum, when Salome's two sons were obliged to bring their boat, in all haste, alongside the other, that they might help to save Peter's straining net from breaking, St. John's history was bound up, as it were, with The Blessed Life. So that, in tracing the Sacred Footsteps of the Redeemer, you have already been made acquainted with the scenes in which "the beloved disciple" was a principal figure. Apart from the occasions on which he acted in concert with his brother, you have seen him reclining close to his Beloved Lord during the solemn Last Supper just before the Betrayal, you have marked him waiting in the courtyard of the high priest's palace, mourning at the foot of the Cross, entering the Empty Tomb. Again, you have read how, when the Voice he used to know so well in all Its Cadences, called unexpectedly, in the early morning, from the silent shore of Gennesaret, he was the first to start, and turn round in the boat, and recognize his Master.

Hence, as so little in his story will be new to you, I cannot think of telling it, even as regularly as the many breaks in it allow it to be told, from beginning to end. Rather, I must seek to gather up one or two of the threads that, having partly used, I dropped when I was weaving together some fragments of Th

Great Story Which is so different from all others that the world has ever heard. These will be slight and short, it is true, but I prepared you for that when I pointed out that—if we except St. Paul—none of the New Testament characters, save One, are drawn for us in more than outline.

I want you to look at St. John, for a little while, in the light of his friendship with St. Peter. In that way, I think, I can fasten my few threads together best. But first I have a single small incident to relate, bearing upon St. John alone, which, as far as these little books are concerned, has not been mentioned before. It can be told without many words.

One day, not long, it would seem, after the Transfiguration of the Blessed Saviour, St. John came to Him with a complaint. *Master ! he said, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.* But the Holy One replied : *Forbid him not ! for he that is not against us is for us.* We find no new feature of St. John's character here. Like his mother, he threw all his heart into all that he did. His devotion to his Master was so intense, that he was hotly indignant at the slightest want of respect for Him. The same rash spirit which prompted both brothers to call fire down upon the unkind Samaritans, prompted the younger one in this instance also. And perhaps St. John's feeling was tinged, besides, with that Jewish jealousy which we saw continually troubling St. Paul so terribly. At that time, the Twelve were all still clinging, in spite of the Blessed Lord's repeated Warnings, to the expectation of His earthly Triumph as a conquering Messiah, in which, as they thought, only Jews would share. And, of all Jews, they naturally considered themselves the most likely to be gainers when the longed-for time should come. *Behold ! Peter said, on one occasion we have forsaken all, and followed Thee ; what sh*
we have therefore ?

But the day came when St. John swept all such narrow ideas far away behind him, although, like St. Peter and St. James the Just, he was an Apostle to the Jews rather than to the Gentiles. How differently, nay, how oppositely, he learnt to feel, the following words, which are taken out of the letter already quoted, will show:—*If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. He that saith, "I know Him," and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.* Love for the Blessed Lord was thus, in St. John's opinion, the one thing needful, and it was to be proved, moreover, only in one way. In *walking*—that is, striving by His Mighty Help, to walk—even as *He walked*. And it was in this "walk" that he knew how much there must be for everybody to "overcome"! how many grievous temptations of various kinds, both from the heart within, and from the world without. St. Paul's conviction, as you know, was the same as St. John's; it is thus expressed, in other words, in his letter to the Galatian converts: *In JESUS CHRIST neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.*

But now we must begin to think about St. John in connection with St. Peter, who, though so much older than himself, was yet, in a marked manner, his companion and friend. I daresay you have scarcely noticed yet, but you will notice when you are older, that there is no better way of judging of the colour of thing than to intertwine it, not with another colour but with another shade of the same colour. Lay a thin

that is blue by a thing that is crimson, and a glance will show you, certainly, that blue is blue, and is not crimson. But let your blue sample lie side by side with another shade of blue, and at once all the delicate points of distinction will come out, and you will know whether your blue is the blue of the sky, or of the sea, or of the gentian, or of the sapphire. Its individuality will be clear to you. Do not be frightened at the word "individuality"; it has the misfortune to be long, but like many another long word, it is quite harmless: it means singleness, or distinctness, or separateness from all besides.

Now I am not going to attempt any examination of St. Peter's character as a whole, or to compare him with his friend, for comparison implies such an examination. But you know a good deal about him already. Throughout the Story of the Blessed Life, "Simon, son of Jonas," is continually coming to the front. You have seen that he was affectionate, enthusiastic, impetuous, generous, rash, self-confident. So that I need scarcely point out to you how well his character, having so many traits in common with the characters of Salome's sons, will serve, like "another shade of blue," to throw up St. John's individuality, which we are now considering.

It was with St. Peter that St. John went into Jerusalem from Bethany, to engage that upper room which was to be the scene of the Last Supper, and of the Last Farewell Discourse. And though we are told that, when the guilty Judas had done his worst, and the Blessed Redeemer was arrested, "all the disciples forsook Him, and fled," yet two of them were deserters only for the moment, for they presently turned, and followed Him again, "afar off." You know that those two were Peter and John. And, in spite of the sin into which Peter presently fell, the First Easter Morning found them again together; they had probably been together all the

dreary, silent day before. Together they hurried to the Empty Tomb. Together they gazed, awe-struck, on its mysterious Orderliness. Together they went away, "believing." Time passed, and they were fishing together on the lake, as of old, when the Voice of their Master called to them. A little later, we see them passing together into the Temple, through the Beautiful Gate, at the hour of prayer,—teaching together, and working wonders in the Name of the Lord JESUS,—imprisoned together, because they persisted in proclaiming a Crucified Messiah,—journeying together into Samaria, to confirm Philip's converts;—and both were present when St. Paul arrived from Antioch, to make his indignant appeal against the people who were sowing mischief among his Gentile disciples. But enough has been said to prove the constancy of their companionship. Let us go back, and pay a little attention to a few of the instances of it just enumerated.

It is from St. John himself, and from him only, that we learn of his presence on three of these occasions. The other evangelists mention only Peter's rally from the cowardice which overcame all the Apostles in the Olive Garden. "Peter," they say, "followed afar off." But St. John adds: *and so did another disciple*, meaning himself. And then he tells us how "that other disciple's" acquaintance with the high priest served as a passport for Peter, as well as for himself, into the outer court of the palace. What happened after that, you all know.

During the awful Three Hours of darkness on Golgotha, St. John was one of the few mourners near the Foot of the Cross. Peter was not there: no one knows where he was then. But the friends were soon together again. What Peter had done had not broken up their friendship, because John was pitiful as well as trustworthy, trustworthy as well as loyal, loyal to his fallen friend as well as to his Crucified Master. It is thought that John sought Peter as soon as no more

remained to be done to the Precious Dead Body of his Lord, and he had taken the Virgin tenderly, as he had been commanded, to his own home. The First Day of the week found the friends, as I have said, still together, Peter—we are sure—still a contrite mourner, John—we may be equally sure—a mourner and a comforter in one. Some think that Peter, as well as the Virgin, had by this time been received into John's lodging, as an inmate. But this is only conjecture. At all events, Mary of Magdala knew where to find both Peter and John. For it was straight to them that she ran with the amazing, and, as she thought, terrible news that the Sacred Body had vanished from the Tomb. Immediately, all else was for the moment forgotten, and the two friends set out at full speed for the Garden. "The other disciple," as St. John in his modesty calls himself, *did outrun Peter, and came first to the Sepulchre*. He stooped, and looked in, and saw that indeed Mary's eyes had not deceived her. But he paused. He did not go in. Presently, however, Peter came up, and he—characteristically—did not hesitate a moment. He went in, and then, the lead having been taken, St. John followed. The same humility which led him to suppress his own name in his Gospel, kept him always from putting himself forward in any way. He was less bold, but he was more strong, than Peter. His natural impetuosity expressed itself in his eager running, but he was easily outstripped in assurance.

And now we come to the third incident to be considered. In this case the circumstance itself is recorded only by St. John. His mind, when he wrote his Memoir of the Lord, was full of memories of those Blessed Fifty Days, when, as he went about his daily work, he had the hope that, before sunset ended it, he might perhaps behold The Face, and hear The Voice, Which at any moment could turn earth into a very *Paradise*. *Many other Signs*, he says, after telling the story of Thomas, *many other Signs truly did JESUS in*

the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this Book ; but these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is THE CHRIST, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have Life through His Name. Then follows the account of the Manifestation "at the sea of Tiberias." You know how, after the meal on the beach, which no human hands prepared, had been shared by the fishermen with their Risen Lord, Peter was thrice closely questioned by his Master as to his love for Him, and how, after he had thrice asserted it, and had been bidden to "feed" the sheep and lambs of the Good Shepherd, he was warned that his love would one day be sharply tried, even unto death. But this Suggestion as to the future was followed by a plain injunction, which embraced the present as well as the future, and was no doubt meant to occupy all Peter's thoughts. *Follow Me !* said the Lord, and with these two solemn Words He ceased to speak. Just at that moment, Peter, always versatile,—that is, quick to turn from one thing to another—caught sight of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and instantly he was possessed with a desire to know somewhat of his friend's future also. His thoughts, as usual, leapt to his lips. *Lord !* he exclaimed, *and what shall this man do ?* But the Holy One responded so guardedly as to tell him nothing. *If I will,* He answered kindly, *that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou Me !* On this vague Reply a rumour was afterwards built that St. John was not destined to die like other men, but he himself complains, in his gentle fashion, of its unreasonableness, and is careful to show, in the concluding passages of his Gospel, that no ground existed for supposing any unusual lot to be in store for him. He was very patient when he wrote this ; and, as years went by, his patience was tested with singular severity. Yet we know that he had once been almost as impatient, and as eager, as his hasty, loving friend, St. Peter. A reason for the change is not far to seek ; I think the next chapter will explain it.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

TRUE friendship is a perpetual *giving*. A giving of all sorts of things,—of help, and sympathy, and time, and trouble, and honesty, and courage, and loyalty,—and *love*, which, in one sense, covers all the rest. Sometimes, of course, money is among the gifts kept ready to be poured out, but it is less than the least of the others, and comparatively few people have it to give. A real friend is always ready “to spend and to be spent” for the person he loves, and hence only generous people make good friends.

I am sure you cannot have forgotten how beautiful was the friendship between Jonathan and David. Perhaps one of two friends always gives more than the other. Jonathan, at all events, seems to us to have given more than David. He certainly had more to give. And in the friendship between St. John and St. Peter, though both, no doubt, gave all that they had, yet I think St. Peter received most, because St. John had most to give. St. John strikes us as one of those persons who seem made to be leant upon. But in addition to his natural fitness to be a friend, he surely owed much—more than can be told—to Another Friendship into which he was admitted. He was a retiring man, as you have seen,—little given to magnifying himself. And yet he tells us, five distinct times, that he was *the disciple whom JESUS loved*. There must have been something singularly winning about this “son of thunder,” something which perhaps was possessed in a less degree by Lazarus of Bethany, whom, also, we are told, that JESUS loved. And that young man, who had kept the Commandments from

his youth up, but who would not "sell all that he had" for the Sake of the Saviour,—had he, too, a spark of this, whatever it was, that drew forth the special Love of the Holy One like a magnet? for *JESUS, beholding him, we read, loved him.* I cannot tell you. These things are among the many that, for the present, are hidden from us. But I think we may easily see how St. John came to be such a good friend to St. Peter. He had learnt, by unspeakably sweet experience, what friendship ought to be; he had tasted it in its perfection; he had received so much that he could give more than other men. The blessedness of such communion as he was privileged to enjoy lies beyond the grasp of our imagination. When we think how infinitely good, how loving, how tender, how sympathizing, how Divinely compassionate the Blessed Lord was to all His disciples, and to many who were not His disciples, we can only reverently wonder—for we cannot conceive—what He must have been to St. John. No wonder that the man who had the memory of Such Love, became "all love." No wonder that his Memoir of the Master should be different, as it is, in so many ways, from the others. No wonder that he grew patient in his later loneliness, when he was waiting for the Will of Such a Friend to be done!

I can tell you very little about St. John's life after the date of that council at Jerusalem, which was held to consider the appeal of Paul and Barnabas against the Judaizers at Antioch. We may reasonably suppose that he stayed on in the Holy City as long as the Virgin, who had been entrusted to his care on Golgotha, lived. And when he did at length leave Jerusalem, it is believed that he went first to Ephesus, and then taught, in the Name of his Beloved Master, in the several Churches of Asia Minor. The three Letters from him which we possess were probably *written during this period*, but on this point none can *speak positively*. After many years he was banished

by the emperor Domitian to the rugged island of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea, and there it was that he wrote the Book of the Revelation. If it had not been for his faith, and his love, and his precious memories, life would have dragged wearily along in this exile, for he was cut off from all opportunities of working for the Blessed Saviour Whom he loved so passionately, and he seemed to be doing nothing. But, as I have said, he knew Whose Will it was that he should wait long, and be to all appearance useless, and that was enough for him.

The Book of the Revelation is addressed to "seven Churches in Asia," those, namely, of Ephesus, of Smyrna, of Pergamos, of Thyatira, of Sardis, of Philadelphia, and of Laodicea. In the opening chapter, the Apostle very clearly and touchingly describes and accounts for his position. *I, John, he says, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of JESUS CHRIST, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the Testimony of JESUS CHRIST.*

During his long banishment, the "beloved disciple" must have learnt to know the sea well. It takes a long time to do that, truly, but he had plenty of time. All round him it lay, and showed him its hundred moods, and his thoughts set themselves to its sound, as to solemnly murmuring music. That Book of his, written at Patmos, while he was sharing the sea-birds' solitude, is full of rich and varied imagery; and through it all the waves, with their countless colours, and lights, and shadows, and meanings, seem fitfully to come and go,—ebbing sometimes, indeed, a long way out, but returning. We read, for example, among the more direct allusions to them, of "a sea of glass mingled with fire," and of "a sea of glass like unto crystal." And, twice over, of "the voice of many waters" which must have been always in the exile's ears:—*theirs was the only earthly voice that spoke to him!*

But yet there is a touch which suggests that the sea oppressed him. No one who has not seen it, as he saw it, from a small island, closing round him like a stupendous girdle, can tell how he felt about it. Besides, he was a prisoner, and it was his jailer; it separated him from all that he loved best on earth. And he did not know that he would ever be released. "I saw," he writes, recording his Visions, "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and—*there was no more sea!*" It is impossible to avoid fancying that, in that last clause, one catches a sigh of relief.

The Apostle of Love could not work, then, for the throbbing sea rolled between him and his work. He could only wait. And waiting is hard work to all "sons of thunder," however submissive. He did not, however, end his days on that rocky island. After a long time he was enabled to go again to Ephesus, and there, as we believe, he died. But about his death I can tell you nothing. I cannot point with certainty either to the year, or the manner, or even to the place in which that life of long-drawn patience ended. All that we know is that though "the beloved disciple" had tarried a weary while, his Master came at last, and called him.

I must not forget to tell you in this last chapter, as I promised I would, why I thought that St. Paul's story should stand between the two stories of Salome's sons. The reason was simple. The best order in which to place them seemed to be the order in which they ended. St. John lived so very long after his brother, and even after St. Paul, had died, that his short, broken story justly claimed the few last pages of the book. And besides this, the lives of these three Apostles, though they were all alike consecrated to the Saviour, present us with three distinct types of true service.

St. James fought well, and the fight was soon over

for him. He was allowed to be the first of the Twelve to die for the Master. He passed into His Beloved Presence with one brief, sharp pang.

But St. John's was a prolonged trial. He was ready to suffer, and did suffer, many a time. But slow, lonely, dreary waiting was *his* portion. Patient endurance, in unusual measure, was the offering required of him. The contrast between the lots of the two brothers is very striking. With one breath they had declared their ability to accept the Cup and the Baptism of their Lord. And both were tested,—tried, as gold is tried in the fire,—but how differently!

Between their two lives the career of the Apostle to the Gentiles finds its fitting place. For it blended elements of both. It was vehement as well as long, it had its pauses as well as its deadly blows. St. Paul wrestled, and fought, and agonized, he was beaten, and stoned, and hunted, and reviled, and betrayed. He tasted exile also, and loneliness, and want, and weariness, and misgivings. And even the welcome sword of death threatened long, and was long unsheathed, before it fell.

St. Paul was just taking up the Cross when St. James laid it down. St. John's waiting was just beginning when St. Paul's waiting ended.

It here occurs to me as possible that some of you may have wondered why, in speaking of the Apostles, I have sometimes used, and sometimes omitted, the prefix *Saint*. If this is so, I owe you an explanation, and yet I fear that I cannot give you any that you will understand. However, let me do my best. The more closely we look into the lives of the Apostles after the Ascension of the Blessed Lord into Heaven, the more plainly we must all see that the men who lived them are thoroughly entitled to our reverence. They were far from perfect, it is true, but they "followed after holiness" so perseveringly, and lived habitually on so high a level, that we may well, indeed, call

them "saints." Occasionally, however, *in very endearment* one instinctively lays aside the truest and most undisputed titles; a very little observation will show you this. And I find it hard to believe that any one could misunderstand the omission, when it is—as it ought to be—the exception, and not the rule. I am afraid this will scarcely be intelligible to you at present, but I will let it stand, nevertheless, for by and by perhaps you may see what I mean, and in the meantime the words can wait.

I have very little more to tell you about the "beloved disciple." But among the many sweet legends which cluster round his name there is one that bears the stamp of reality so clearly that I cannot leave it unnoticed. Tradition says that after the old man returned to Ephesus from Patmos, when he was so infirm that he had neither strength to walk nor breath to preach, he used to be carried daily through the streets on a litter, by two of his faithful friends. And as his bearers moved slowly along, his eyes rested fondly on all the young people and children that he met, and he turned his head towards them as he lay, and smiled, and moved his hands beseechingly, and said: *Little children, love one another!* On group after group he laid this gentle precept as he passed along, and thus, to the very last, in all his feebleness, he continued to breathe forth the echo of the great truth which he had taught so long: *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

There is something very attractive to most children in imagery taken from the life of a shepherd. Partly, no doubt, this is because so many of them are told, *when they are very young*, that the Blessed Saviour *called Himself* the Good Shepherd, and spoke of *them as His lambs*. When I was writing about *David*, I remarked how very commonly his "*shepherd's Psalm*" is the first that finds its way into

the nursery. Now one of the most beautiful of the Discourses delivered by the Lord JESUS when He was here, is full of pictures drawn from shepherd life, and I have found that children love it just as they love the "shepherd's Psalm." This Discourse, as well as many others, is recorded only by the Apostle John, and it is he too, you recollect, who tells us about St. Peter's commission to feed the Blessed Lord's "sheep" and "lambs." He seems to have treasured up Saying after Saying of his Beloved Master in his memory, as jewels are treasured and laid away in a casket. And when the right moment came, and he was inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT to record some of his sweet memories, it was as if the spring of the casket was touched, and forthwith the amassed treasures poured out in overflowing abundance. The Holy Bible is the Word of God, and from beginning to end it betrays the Divine Influence under Which it was written. But of all its books, the tone of none, perhaps, strikes us as so heavenly as that of "The Gospel according to St. John." We can hardly wonder at this when we think for a moment what manner of mind it was from which, as it passed through it, the Memoir took its tinge. It was a mind steeped in Love, and occupied entirely with One Blessed Theme. The Centre of the "beloved disciple's" waking and sleeping thoughts, the Subject round Which they were always circling, was That LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKETH AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

Let me end this little book with a few sentences taken from that beautiful Discourse of The Good Shepherd Which, as I have said, is written only in St. John's Memoir of the Blessed Saviour. I wish I had room to transcribe the whole, for below it all there seems to run a whisper of the "pastures of tender grass" by the "waters of quietness," through which David declared that the Lord leads His people. A part must suffice, however, but the Words quote

will represent the rest as truly as a violet, brought to me just now from a grave I love, tells of the fragrant breath of many violets, which is making a whole Churchyard sweet, far away from the place where I am writing.

And These are the Words :—

I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His Life for the sheep.

But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.

As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down My Life for the sheep.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice; and there shall be One Fold, and One Shepherd.

My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:

And I give unto them Eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand.

THE END.

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